

OBAMA SIGNS TAX BILL

President Barack Obama signs \$858 billion tax deal into law in a ceremony in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex, Friday, Dec. 17, 2010 in Washington.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

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Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com Website: www.arubatoday.com Tel:582-7800 Saturday, December 18, 2010



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N. Korea warns S. Korea to stop live-fire drills



A South Korean marine stands guard on Yeonpyeong island, South Korea, Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

Associated Press

FOSTER KLUG
KIM KWANG-TAE

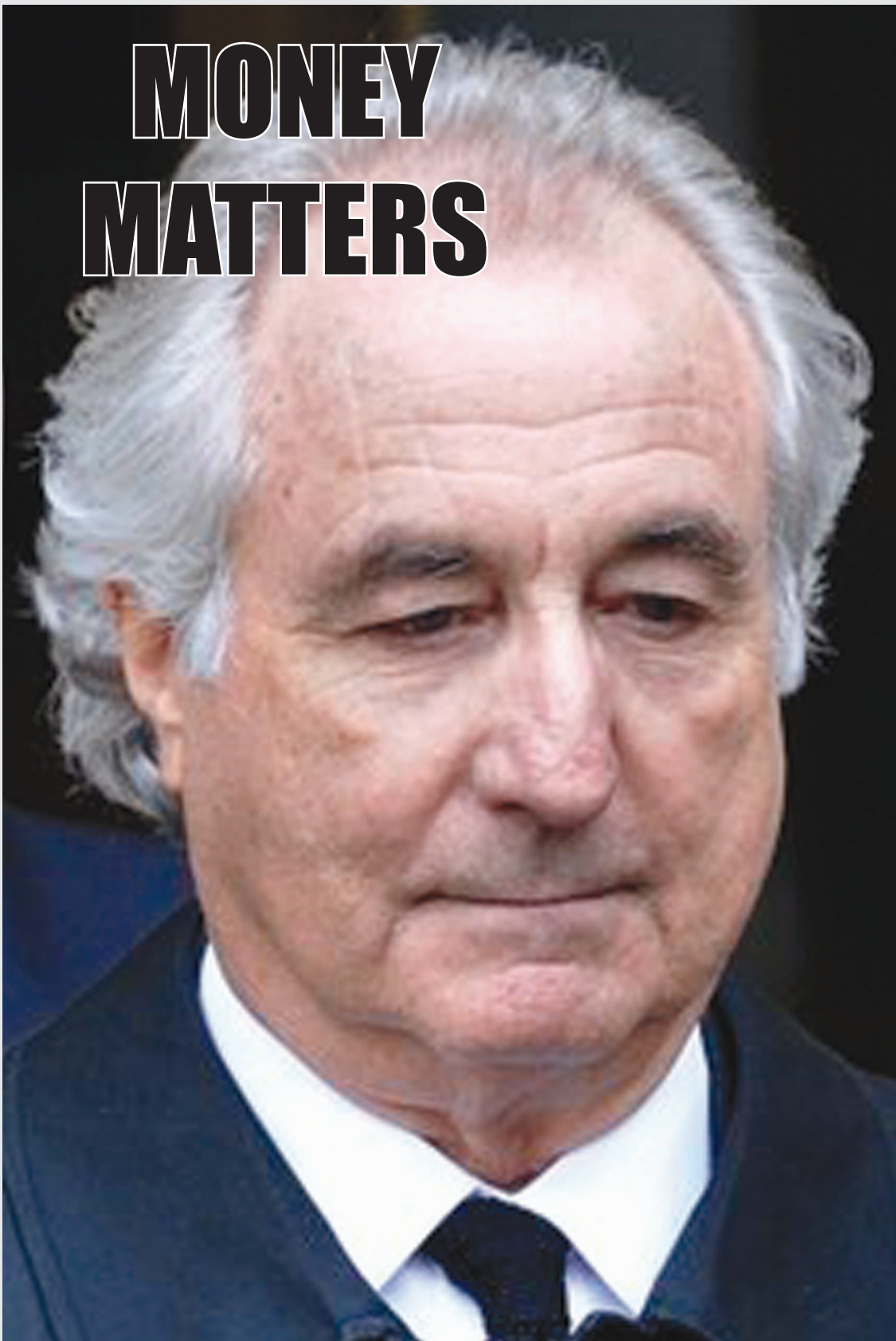
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea warned South Korea on Friday not to stage artillery drills on a front-line island the North bombed last month, saying it would hit back even harder than in the previous attack that killed four South Koreans.

The North warned the South against similar drills before the Nov. 23 shelling that destroyed homes and renewed fears of war on the divided peninsula.

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MONEY MATTERS



FILE - In this March 10, 2009 file photo, Bernard Madoff exits Manhattan federal court in New York. The trustee recovering money for Bernard Madoff's burned investors has reached a settlement with the estate of a Florida philanthropist and businessman who made billions of dollars off the fraud. Court-appointed trustee Irving Picard planned an announcement Friday in Manhattan about the estate of Jeffrey Picower, who drowned after suffering a heart attack in the swimming pool of his Palm Beach, Fla., mansion on Oct. 25, 2009.

(AP Photo/Louis Lanzano, file)

\$7.2B is recovered for Madoff's victims

By TOM HAYS
DAVID B. CARUSO,
Associated Press

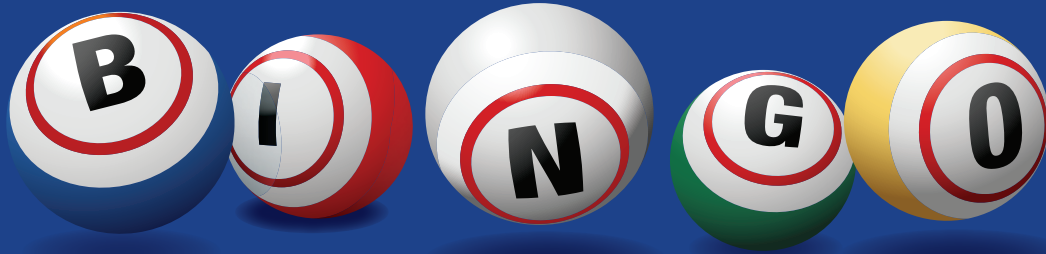
NEW YORK — Many of Bernard Madoff's victims who thought they lost everything could get at least half their money back after the widow of a Florida philanthropist agreed Friday to return a staggering \$7.2 billion that her husband reaped from the giant Ponzi scheme.

Federal prosecutors reached the settlement with the estate of Jeffrey Picower, a businessman who drowned after suffering a heart attack in the swimming pool of his Palm Beach, Fla., mansion in October 2009. Picower was the single biggest beneficiary of Madoff's fraud.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara called the forfeiture the largest in Justice Department history and a "game changer" for those swindled by Madoff. He commended Picower's widow, Barbara, "for agreeing to turn over this truly staggering sum, which really was always other people's money."

"We will return every penny received from almost 35 years of investing with Bernard Madoff," Barbara Picower said in a statement. "I believe the Madoff Ponzi scheme was deplorable, and I am deeply saddened by the tragic impact it continues to have on the lives of its victims. It is my hope that this settlement will ease that suffering."

Continued on Page A3



Saturday, December 18th starting at 1pm

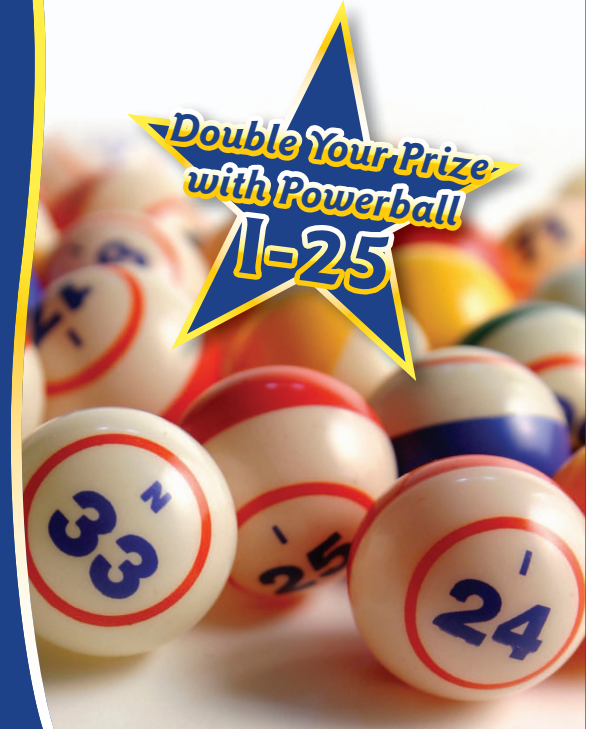
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Air Force blocks media sites that post WikiLeaks



WASHINGTON – The Air Force is blocking computer access to The New York Times and other media sites that published sensitive diplomatic documents released by the

Internet site WikiLeaks, a spokeswoman said Tuesday. Air Force Maj. Toni Tones said more than 25 websites have been blocked and cannot be viewed by any Air Force

computer. The ban aimed at preventing the viewing of classified information does not apply to personal computers. She said the action was taken by the 24th Air Force,

which is commanded by Maj. Gen. Richard Webber and is responsible for cyberwarfare and computer security for the service. The move was approved by Air Force lawyers, she said.

The Army and Navy say they have not taken similar actions. “If a site has republished the documents, then we block it,” she said, adding that the move to prevent access to the media sites was done recently. She said she was not sure of the date.

Tones said the New York Times is the only major U.S. newspaper included in the ban. Others include Der Spiegel in Germany, the Guardian in Britain and Le Monde in France.

Tones said that the 24th Air Force routinely blocks network access to websites that host inappropriate material, including classified information such as that released by WikiLeaks. Any

computer on the Air Force network is now unable to link to the sites. WikiLeaks released more than a quarter million sensitive State Department cables in late November.

The White House on Dec. 3 formally reminded all federal employees and government contractors that anyone without a security clearance is not permitted to read classified documents, such as the diplomatic messages published by WikiLeaks, even on a personal computer at home outside work hours.

It was not immediately clear how the U.S. government would enforce this, but the White House said employees who inadvertently viewed the information should contact their U.S. security offices at work. The notice by the White House Office of Management and Budget said publication of the files by WikiLeaks “has resulted in damage to our national security.” □

The post office is bracing for its busiest day of the year on Monday

WASHINGTON – The agency’s busiest day is traditionally the Monday before Christmas as people mail cards and packages they prepared over the weekend. Postal officials expect 800 million pieces of mail to be handled on Monday, 40 percent more than the average daily volume.

“There’s still time to mail greeting cards and ship presents,” Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe said in a statement. “If customers get their cards and packages to us by Tuesday, Dec. 21, we’ll get them delivered by Christmas.” Post office preparing for busiest day of the year □



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MADOFF

Continued from Front Page

The settlement means roughly half of the \$20 billion that investors entrusted to Madoff has now been recovered, authorities said.

The \$7.2 billion eclipses by far the deals reached with other defendants sued by Irving Picard, the court-appointed trustee who is recovering victims' money. The next largest — \$625 million — was announced earlier this month in a settlement with Massachusetts businessman and philanthropist Carl Shapiro.

Madoff's burned clients greeted the news warily.

Willard Foxton, a British journalist whose father committed suicide after losing his life savings, said he was stunned that a major investor decided to return so much money.

"I don't think he would have killed himself if he thought a few years down the line that he was going to be getting a good amount of his money back," he said. He added: "I thought we had zero chance of getting any money back, and I still am very, very skeptical. If I see a penny before 2015 I'd be amazed."

Lawrence Velvel, a law school dean who lost money he had invested with Madoff for decades, said Picower's widow "did the right thing."

But he was wary about who, in the end, would benefit more — the multitude of small and mid-sized investors who had been counting on their investments for their retirement, or the big hedge funds that did business with Madoff.

"It's going to go to the hedge funds," he said.

Madoff, 72, is serving a 150-year prison sentence.

Jeffrey Picower, who was 67 when he died, was one of Madoff's oldest clients. Over the decades, he withdrew about \$7 billion in bogus profits, or more than a third of the sum that disappeared in the scandal. The money paid out to Picower was supposedly made on stock trades, but authorities said it was simply stolen from other investors.

Picower's lawyers claimed he knew nothing about the scheme, but Picard had argued in court papers that the businessman must have known the returns were "implausibly high" and based on fraud.

Barbara Picower said she was "absolutely confident that my husband, Jeffrey, was in no way complicit in Madoff's fraud and want to underscore the fact that neither the trustee, nor the U.S. attorney, has charged him with any illegal act."

Asked whether criminal investigators had any suspicions about Picower, Bharara would say only that the question became moot when he died. He gave the same response to questions about Mark Madoff, the son who committed suicide on Dec. 11.

Lawyers for Picower's estate have been in negotiations with the trustee for some time. In his will, Picower had earmarked most of his fortune for charity.

A huge charitable foundation that Picower had created closed in 2009 after its assets were wiped out in the Madoff fraud. It had donated hundreds of millions to colleges, libraries and other groups.

Thousands of people, banks and hedge funds that invested with Madoff saw their savings wiped out when the fraud was revealed two years ago. Many, though, like Picower, had been drawing bogus profits from their Madoff accounts for years and walked away from the scheme having taken out more money than they put in.

Madoff's clients had thought, based on his fraudulent account statements, that they had more than \$60 billion invested in stocks with Madoff. Investigators found, though, that no investments were made, and that an estimated \$20 billion in principal was simply being paid out bit by bit to other investors. □

Lab scans bones that may belong to Amelia Earhart



NORMAN, Okla. — Three bone fragments found on a deserted South Pacific island are being analyzed to determine if they belong to Amelia Earhart tests that could finally prove she died as a castaway after failing in her 1937 quest to become the first woman to fly around the world.

Scientists at the University of Oklahoma hope to extract DNA from the bones, which were found earlier this year by a Delaware group dedicated to the recovery of historic aircraft.

"There's no guarantee," said Ric Gillespie, director of the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery in Delaware. "You only have to say you have a bone that may be human and may be linked to Earhart and people get excited. But it is true that, if they can get DNA, and if they can match it to Amelia Earhart's DNA, that's pretty good."

The remains turned up in May and June at what seemed to be an abandoned campsite near where native work crews found skeletal remains in 1940. The pieces appear to be from a cervical bone, a neck bone and a finger.

But Gillespie offered a word of caution: The fragments could be from a turtle. They were found near a hollowed-out turtle shell that might have been used to collect rain water, but there were no other turtle parts nearby.

"This site tells the story of how someone or some people attempted to live as castaways," Gillespie said in an interview with The Associated Press. Bird and fish carcasses

nearby suggested they were prepared and eaten by Westerners.

"These fish weren't eaten like Pacific Islanders" eat fish.

Lab officials said results of the tests could take week or months.

Gillespie has been traveling to the site since 1989 but acknowledges there's been little progress toward solving the Earhart mystery. It did not help that bones and a sextant box found three years after Earhart's disappearance disappeared themselves after being sent to Fiji.

"It's like science. You take the information you have and formulate a hypothesis, but 9 1/2 times out of 10 you turn out wrong, then you go through the whole thing again but you're closer," Gillespie said.

Anthropologists who had previously worked with Gillespie's group suggested that he ask the University of Oklahoma's Molecular Anthropology Laboratory to try to extract DNA from the fragments for comparison to genetic material donated by an Earhart family member.

Cecil Lewis, an assistant professor of anthropology at the lab, said the university received a little more than a gram of bone fragments about two weeks ago.

"I think it's best to talk about more when we have something say about it," Lewis said. "Think how disheartened people will be if it's just a turtle bone."

Gillespie said the group had tried to test possible genetic material recovered during a 2007 expedition, but a Canadian lab was unable to extract DNA from dried excrement.

Other material recovered this year also suggested the presence of Westerners at the remote site on Nikumaroro Island, 1,800 miles south of Hawaii:

Someone carried shells ashore before cutting them open and slicing out the meat. Islanders cut the meat out at sea.

Bottoms of bottles found nearby were melted on the bottom, suggesting they had been put into a fire, possibly to boil water. (A Coast Guard unit on the island during World War II would have had no need to boil water.)

Bits of makeup were found at the scene. The group is checking to see which products Earhart endorsed and whether an inventory lists specific types of makeup carried on her final trip.

A glass bottle with remnants of lanolin and oil, possibly hand lotion. □

Laura Bush speaks by phone to Suu Kyi



DALLAS — Former first lady Laura Bush, a longtime advocate for free elections in Myanmar, spoke for the first time Friday with the isolated Asian country's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who was released last month after more than seven years of house arrest. Bush told The Associated Press that "it was thrilling" to finally get to speak to Suu Kyi by phone.

"I was especially happy to hear how strong her voice was and how enthusiastic," Bush said.

Suu Kyi, who won the 1991 Nobel Peace prize for her nonviolent struggle for democracy, was first arrested by Myanmar's military junta

in 1989 and has spent 15 of the past 21 years in detention. Bush, the wife of former President George W. Bush, has advocated for free elections in Myanmar, also known as Burma, and has spoken out many times about Suu Kyi's plight, raising the issue at United Nations meetings and with U.S. senators.

Bush said Suu Kyi told her that during her house arrest, she listened to the Voice of America on the radio and was aware of how much support she had around the world. She said she also knew of a 2008 visit Bush and her daughter, Barbara, made to a refugee camp in Thailand for political refugees from Myanmar.

"She was very forthcoming but we both assumed the call was bugged. She was circumspect and so was I," Bush said.

Suu Kyi's release last month came a week after Myanmar's first election in 20 years, which was widely seen as a sham. The 1990 election was won in a landslide by Suu Kyi's National League

for Democracy party, but the military refused to hand over power and instead clamped down on its opponents.

Bush said that it appears that the government is allowing Suu Kyi to conduct the meetings and phone calls she wants.

"I hope I'll have the chance to speak with her again," Bush said. "I hope that someday we'll have the chance to meet face to face."

The former first lady said she also told Suu Kyi about an effort by the George W. Bush Presidential Center to be a repository for the papers and oral histories of political dissidents struggling to spread democracy. Bush said Suu Kyi was receptive to the idea of one day being interviewed for the project.

The center, which will be made up of a presidential library, museum and policy institute, is set to open in February 2013 on the campus of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, the city George and Laura Bush moved to after he left office in 2009. □

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Calif. regulators OK major greenhouse gas rules

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Hoping other states will follow suit, California regulators overwhelmingly approved the nation's most extensive system giving owners of power plants, refineries and other major polluters financial incentives to emit fewer greenhouse gases.

The Air Resources Board voted 9-1 Thursday to pass the key piece of California's 2006 climate law — called AB32.

"We're inventing this," said Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the state's air quality board. "There is still going to be quite a bit of action needed before it becomes operational."

Officials said they hope that other states will follow the lead of the world's eighth largest economy. State officials also are discussing plans to link the new system with similar ones under way or being planned in Canada, Europe and Asia.

California is trying to "fill the vacuum created by the failure of Congress to pass any kind of climate or energy legislation for many years now," said Nichols.

A standing-room only board chambers featured testimony from more than 170 witnesses Thursday. Outside the chambers, a few climate change skeptics held signs reading "Global Warming: Science by Homer Simpson."

Some businesses that would fall under the new rules say the system could dampen California's already flagging economy, complicate lawmakers' efforts to close a \$28.1 billion revenue shortfall and lead to an increase in the price of electricity.

The rate increases, however, would still need approval from the state.

Continued on Next Page

Obama salutes spirit of compromise, signs tax bill

By JIM KUHNHENN,

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama saluted a new spirit of political compromise Friday as he signed into law a huge tax bill extending cuts for all Americans — including benefits for the rich that he and congressional liberals had denounced — along with billions of dollars in help for the middle class and jobless workers.

“It’s a good deal for the American people; this is progress and that’s what they sent us here to achieve,” Obama said as a rare bipartisan assembly of lawmakers looked on. The package retains Bush-era tax rates for all taxpayers, from the working poor to the wealthiest. It also offers 13 months of extended benefits to the unemployed and attempts to stimulate the economy with a Social Security payroll tax cut for all workers.

At a cost of \$858 billion over

two years, the deal contains provisions dear to both Democrats and Republicans. It represents the most money that Obama was likely to have been able to dedicate over the next year to a slowly recovering economy, at the same time increasing the federal deficit at a time when the country is growing increasingly anxious about the red ink.

Dramatic both as an economic and a political accomplishment, the agreement sets the stage for Obama’s new relationship with Congress in the aftermath of devastating November elections for Democrats that stripped them of control of the House.

Obama called for maintaining the spirit of cooperation.

“I’m also hopeful that we might refresh the American people’s faith in the capability of their leaders to govern in challenging times,” he said.

“Belief in the capacity of their institutions in this town to deliver in a rapidly changing world, and, most of all, confidence that our best days as a nation are still ahead of us.”

Obama conceded that the White House and Congress face a difficult challenge when it comes to controlling the deficit and tackling the nation’s debt.

“In some ways this was easier than some of the tougher choices we’re going to have to make next year,” he said.

To strike the bargain, Obama had to set aside his vow to extend tax cuts only for the middle class and lower wage earners. The measure also enacts an estate tax that is more generous to the wealthy than Obama had sought. □



President Barack Obama speaks before signing the \$858 billion tax deal into law in a ceremony in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the WhiteHouse complex, Friday, Dec. 17, 2010 in Washington.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)



GAS RULES

Continued from Previous Page

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger told the board he is sensitive to the recession, but argued that many of the new jobs being created under the system are in the clean technology industry.

“The real jobs we’re creating right now are green jobs. Since 2006 or so green jobs have been created 10 times faster than in any other sector, so it’s also an economic plus,” he said.

But he said reducing greenhouse gas pollution is not just about climate change, but about human health and national security.

“I despise the fact that we send \$1 billion a year to foreign places for our oil and to places that hate us. We send this money to people that hate us and that are organizing terrorists and trying to blow up our country,” he said.

Supporters say the system will help spur economic recovery and innovation, pushing business to invest in clean technologies.

They say the billions of dollars the state collects in the system could help fund clean air programs and help offset any increases in utility rates. Details of the uses of these new funds is still uncertain.

California has already enacted the strictest climate-related regulations in the country involving renewable energy mandates for utilities, tighter fuel-efficiency standards for automobiles and low-carbon fuel standards. □



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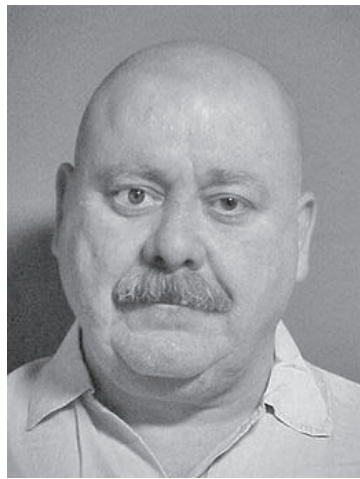
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Drug used in execution could gain wider use

MCALESTER, Okla. — A sedative Oklahoma used to execute a death row inmate that is commonly used to euthanize animals could become more popular because of a nationwide shortage of a key ingredient in several states' lethal injection formulas, death penalty experts say.

John David Duty is believed to be the first person in the United States whose execution included the use of pentobarbital. The 58-year-old was pronounced dead at 6:18 p.m. Thursday at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary. Oklahoma and several other states traditionally have used the barbiturate sodium thiopental to put an inmate to sleep, followed by two other drugs pancuronium bromide, which paralyzes muscles, and potassium chloride, which stops the heart.

But Hospira Inc. the only U.S. manufacturer of sodium thiopental said Thursday new batches of the drug could be available "in the first quarter" of next year. They blamed the shortage on problems with its raw-material providers. "It's a little uncertain if sodium thiopental will be



available, so the states will be looking at what's happening in Oklahoma," said Richard Dieter, executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. "If it works reasonably well, other states might go that way."

Oklahoma prisons spokesman Jerry Massie said after the execution that there did not appear to be any problems with the new drug.

Strapped to a gurney and wearing an eye patch over his right eye, the heavyset Duty apologized to his victim's family. "I hope one day you'll be able to forgive me, not for my sake, but for your own," Duty said. "Thank you, Lord Jesus. I'm ready to go home." The lethal drugs began to flow at 6:12 p.m., and Duty's

breathing became labored one minute later. At 6:15 p.m., he appeared to stop breathing and the color began to drain from his face.

Duty and two other death-row inmates had challenged the state's decision to use pentobarbital, arguing it could be inhumane because a person could be paralyzed but still aware when a painful third drug is administered to stop the heart. On Tuesday, a federal appeals court upheld a ruling against the other two inmates. Duty did not take part in the appeal.

Executions have been delayed in California, Arkansas, Tennessee and Maryland as a result of protocol changes, including the use of new drugs, Dieter said. In Ohio and Washington, laws were passed to allow for the use of sodium thiopental specifically, he said.

But Oklahoma's law calls for the use of a fast-acting barbiturate to be administered first, which gave the state the flexibility to use pentobarbital, Massie said.

"I think Oklahoma is the only state where this issue has come to a head over a new drug," Dieter said. □



Inmate who fled hospital on lam for 18 hours

IOWA CITY, Iowa — A jail inmate with a history of fleeing custody escaped from an Iowa City hospital and eluded authorities during a more than 18-hour crime spree that police say included multiple carjackings and subsequent crashes.

Anthony Koehlhoeffer was arrested about 6 p.m. Wednesday in Bettendorf, near the Iowa-Illinois border, after crashing one of several vehicles he's believed to have stolen while on the lam. Koehlhoeffer, who had been held on charges stemming from two robberies, escaped about 11:30 p.m. Tuesday while receiving court-ordered treatment at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics. Police said the 20-year-old then assaulted a female student in a residence hall parking lot and stole her car. The student was not seriously injured.

About 5:30 a.m. Wednesday, a man believed to be Koehlhoeffer dressed in the hospital-issued gown, flip-flops and a hooded sweat shirt committed a second carjacking at an Iowa City convenience store, said police spokeswoman Sgt. Denise Brotherton. Brotherton said the stolen green Buick crashed into another vehicle, and the man fled through the snow in 10-degree weather. No one was injured.

Police said a woman reported at 9:15 a.m. that she was carjacked and forced to drive the man 55 miles east to Bettendorf. He fled on foot again and left the woman physically unharmed in her vehicle, Brotherton said.

Hours later, Koehlhoeffer crashed a vehicle in Bettendorf that he is accused of carjacking in nearby Davenport, said Bettendorf police spokeswoman Luran Haldeman.

"He tried to flee and he flipped the car," said Haldeman, who didn't know if Koehlhoeffer was injured, but said he was taken to Genesis Medical Center-East in Davenport.

A nursing supervisor at the hospital said she could not release any information Wednesday night. Koehlhoeffer was not available for comment and officials did not know if he had an attorney. Haldeman said in a late Wednesday statement that charges were pending in Bettendorf. University of Iowa police earlier issued an arrest warrant for Koehlhoeffer on a second-degree robbery charge. Authorities in Jefferson County issued an arrest warrant over the escape from custody and Iowa City police issued a warrant for Koehlhoeffer's arrest on a third-degree kidnapping charge with a \$1 million bond.

Jefferson County Sheriff Jerry Droz said his employees brought Koehlhoeffer to the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics for court-ordered treatment Tuesday. Authorities declined to discuss the nature of the treatment, citing federal privacy law. Droz said the hospital signed paperwork taking custody, but university spokesman Tom Moore disputed that.

Moore said inmates are released from custody when they receive treatment and it's up to law enforcement agencies to keep staff on site if they believe inmates should be guarded.

Moore did acknowledge that university police waited too long more than 9 hours before sending a warning about the escape and carjacking to students, faculty and staff on Wednesday morning. □

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Belly buttons out; now it's necklines and shoulders



ORANJESTAD - It has a speak of its own, a glamorous, hot and sexy image and it has the aura of celebrities and movie stars wafting around it: the fashion world. In this world it is very normal to say things like: "Belly buttons are erogenous zones no more; it's now necklines and shoulders", or talking about jeans: "From very washed to very dark and the natural waist is back." An in-depth look into this interesting world is provided by local top designer Ronchi de Cuba, who has been making waves with his Trash label for the past few years.

Talent abounds in Ronchi, who lights up like a candle when talking about his passion: designing clothes. His store Trash by Ronchi in the Sibelius Street is hidden away in one of the side streets of the Adriaan Lacle Boulevard, yet everyone who is hip and cool, young or old, skinny or voluptuous, finds his or her way to Trash.

Continued on next Page

Marriott Vacation Club honors its results-orientated Aruba team



PALM BEACH – The recent gala celebration marking the contributions and career achievements of Marriott Vacation Club (MVC) associates in Aruba proved notable for the number of outstanding award winners. The long list of honorees well illustrated the high level of local talent working with MVC's Sales and Marketing Division. Among the evening's top awards was the announcement of the J. Willard Marriott Award of Excellence recipient along with 'Sapphire' top producer awards as well as the traditional, year-end accolades.

"The Aruba team consistently ranks among the top rated departments within the entire Marriott Vacation Club International network. It is evidence not only of the quality

of our tourism professionals, but the successful relationship Marriott holds with Aruba. The synergy of associate support and the skills of sales and marketing staff have yielded excellent results," comments Project Director Bettina Gonzalez, who heads the Sales & Marketing Department, which is credited with the tremendous growth in vacation ownership at Aruba Marriott Surf Club and Ocean Club and increases in MVC's Destinations program enrollment from Aruba. "We are extremely proud as well as grateful for all our associates, and in particular, this year's award winners." For overall honors, the top spot of Manager of the Year went to Ligenne Trimon.

Continued on Page A11



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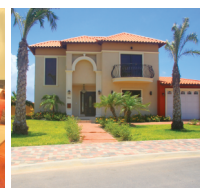
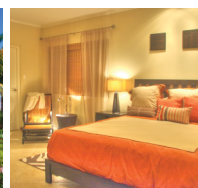


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'What is hot and what is not'

Continued from Page A7

One can find men's, girls' and women's clothes there in a wide array of colors, shapes and sizes. And especially that last thing is very important: Ronchi's ladies sizes go from small to XXXX; in the men's collection until size 46 in pants and XXX. The prices are surprisingly reasonable.

"The Holiday collection is showing colors like violet, teal and turquoise, with a lot of black, black-and-white and the new black: grey," says Ronchi. "The difference compared to last year is that there are fewer prints and more solid colors; only the animal prints continue. They have been in style for the past three years and won't go away soon," he predicts. The designer's personal favorite this year is the short, elegant cocktail dress, which started a year or two ago with movie stars and celebrities wearing them at the Oscars, the Grammy's and MTV award shows.

Of course evening dresses show a lot of skin, yet there is also a trend surfacing with cap shoulders and straight shoulder pads with elbow-length sleeves. The fabrics are luxurious: silk charmeuse is a favorite. It is one of the most

elegant materials on the planet, popular as a light-weight fabric that drapes beautifully. It is smooth and has a semi-lustrous shine to it. Various Trash designs show off the versatility of charmeuse to perfection. Chiffon is also hot, especially when combined with a striking leather jacket or contrasting material. "The wow factor of the dress is now more the cut and the fabric than the color or print; mixing fabrics should be harmonious and eclectic, for instance a fun mix of a light wool jacket with a chiffon skirt," explains Ronchi.

But how does one go about designing four collections each year, and how does one fill an entire store with stunning retail fashion? That last question is easy to answer: Ronchi goes shopping in New York and he can select whatever he likes from special wholesale collections. He also carries several labels: for men that is the mod fit of Ben Sherman, Spanish label Desigual and Canadian Penguin; in ladies' wear he carries Studio, Dana Kay, Jump Girl and Onyx, just to name a few. This year's hottest suits for men are chocolate-colored, with

Paisley ties or striped ties; casual wear is preppier than before, with skinny pants and a tee-shirt or shirt; of course you can find them at Trash.

Trends are carefully watched and researched by Ronchi: the international fashion shows are covered extensively by magazines like Vogue and Harper's Bazaar, but there is also a service from New York called Trend Watch. This service provides the answers to 'What is hot and what is not' and it offers tips and hints for upcoming trends and dominant features that are making the grade. But Ronchi's inspiration for his designer collection comes from music, art, people and movies. He keeps the two strictly separated: "My designs are one-of-a kind, made with exclusive fabrics, which I sometimes design myself. It is a niche market, not mass produced. His coming collection has been inspired by Erté (1892-1990), the father of art-deco, Romain de Tiroff. This Russian-born, diversely-talented 20th century artist flourished in a wide array of fields, including fashion, jewelry, graphic art and set designs. He used his initials R.T. as his name.

Fashion is always on the



move, on the prowl and on fashion guru Ronchi de the go. Local designer and Cuba is right on top of it. □



Fraud detection for the staff of Aruba Wine and Dine

PALM BEACH - On Wednesday, December 15th, Aruba Wine and Dine held a training for their employees about credit card fraud and counterfeit money. The training was given by Aaron Antersijn of Security Solutions Consultancy. Credit cards are used a lot for payments in the hospitality industry. Unfortunately, mistakes are made with these payments, but not any more after this training. Aim of the training was to make the employees aware of fraud with credit cards and with fake money. There is and always will be fake money and therefore it is important for Aruba Wine and Dine to pay more attention to these topics. The number one restaurant group of Aruba strives to give trainings monthly, to let the staff develop their skills and increase the level of service. Trainings given the last months were about coffee, HACCP, hurricanes, safety & security, wine and whisky. □



Catch your own dinner with Driftwood! Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: "From the pier to your plate!"

ORANJESTAD - The downtown marina is home of Driftwood Fishing Charters, the successful fishermen of the established seafood restaurant Driftwood in Oranjestad.

Driftwood owner Herby Merryweather has a love and passion for fishing. A fisherman who knows about fish, what our local waters have to offer, and what the words



"fresh seafood" really mean. What Herby catches will be served in his restaurant on

the same day. Herby loves to share his fishing passion with the many visitors to the island. His fleet of a 35 ft. Twin Engine Bertram yacht and a 50 ft. Twin Engine Post yacht, appropriately called "Driftwood I and II, is available for charters on a daily basis from 8am to

Catch your own dinner

12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm. A charter includes: captain, mate, all fishing equipment, bait, sodas and bottled water. On a full day charter sandwiches and snacks are also included. You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to www.driftwoodaruba.com.

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Rates per boat

Max. 6 people



Winners of Intl. LUHRS Marina Group Blue Marlin Release Tournament 2009

Driftwood Restaurant

This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their extended

menu has been jubled by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 3-course menu for just \$24.

Driftwood Restaurant

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Three generations make Aqua Grill a vacation tradition



PALM BEACH – The Gruberger and Forman families—three generations deep—have been coming to Aruba for the past eight years.

The Long Island, New York families say that finding the best restaurants to enjoy together is part of what makes their vacations special.

The group, who is staying at Marriott's

Surf Club, discovered Aqua Grill when they first started coming to the island, and it has been a tradition ever since.

The oft-praised and critically acclaimed seafood restaurant, located in Palm Beach, features the best of fresh local catches like grouper, snapper, and mahi mahi, as well as seafood delicacies flown in daily from abroad, including live Maine lobster. □

Fishes & More showcases the best seafood entrees

Ask about the Early Bird Menu from 4 PM to 6:30 PM



Fishes & More specialize in freshest fish and seafood on the island, and at the same time please the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which gives the twist to the fabulous dishes. Influences from all over

the world are found back on the menu and they are already well known for the daily changing specials. If you have a large party, or if there is anything you feel like in particular, Fishes & More can always arrange to have your dinner cooked just for you, as they work

only with fresh and honest products! Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort (Former Allegro), they are visited both by individuals and families alike, as they have a super kids menu, so they can enjoy their dinner as much as you

will yours!

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Marriott Vacation Club honors its results-orientated Aruba team



Continued from Page A7

The title of Associate of the Year went to Rita Dirksz. Departmental awards included Nayda Lopez as Sales Executive of the Year (the first female on Aruba to receive this honor), Raphael Nicolaas as Sales Rookie of the Year, Best CSS score went to Gary Barnes, Highest Self-Generated Volume to Francis Groeneveldt and Winning Attitude recognition to Cedrick Croes. For the Marketing Department, the Marketing Executive of the Year award went to Elly Rustveld, Rookie of the Year to Theadjen Giel-Violenes, Winning Attitude awarded to

Margaret Hall, Commitment to Excellence to Claudia Simmons and Front Desk Star to Rendel Petrona.

Every aspect of what makes for a successful MVC associate, represented in the GOVETs awards – in individual goals of Guest service, Owner service, Volume, Expense goals, Teamwork and Self-Development – were also recognized. The awards were given, respectively, to Mariska Winterdaal, Francis Groeneveldt, Nayda Lopez, Jenny Boekhoudt, Nazih Hamawi and Ivick Rasmijn. Top producer stand-outs were provided the ultimate “Sapphire” and “Super

Sapphire” status. Among Sales Executives, this honor went to Nayda Lopez (Super Sapphire) as well as Tina Lampe, Egbert Oduber, Francis Groeneveldt, Tamara Leysner Jorge and Moises Vallejo-Lopez. Marketing Executives with outstanding results including the Super Sapphire recipients Gisela Sa, Elly Rustveld, Fernando Chumpitazi, Claudia Simmons, Angele Geerman and Keila Germain, with Sapphire accolades for Zuraila Wever, Yria do Santos, Camille Simms, Maroushka Sanchez, Thea Giel Violenes, Annie de Windt, Maidi Maduro and Vanessa Flores. The ability to exceed targeted goals can be attributed to the long-time dedication of MVC Aruba associates. The gala celebration also provided the opportunity for the recognition of milestone anniversaries. Years-of-service awards went to Edmond Adonis, Petra Sanchez, Francis Groeneveldt and Gisela Sa, who marked 5 years with MVCI; Bettina Gonzalez, Ligenne Trimon,

Ethiraj “Raja” Vemannan, Moises Uruena, Albert Croes and Jenny Boekhoudt, each with 10 years, and with an admirable 15 years of service to their credit, Zuraila Wever and Theolinda Richardson.

A new award provided for Teamwork and Customer Support was given to Maureen Vrolijk in recognition of the often overlooked contributions in allowing the entire team to succeed.

Among all of the awards of the evening, the J. Willard

Marriott Award of Excellence is the highest form of associate recognition. For her efforts in consistently exceeding expectations, leading by example and enhancing the lives of her co-workers, customers and neighbors with her commitment to service excellence, Marketing Executive Gisela Sa (site award) was presented the evening’s ultimate honor.

Well-deserved congratulations go to all of MVC Aruba’s exemplary associates. □

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(Tournaments are subject to charge as per Management criteria)

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HUMAN HINTS

Full Immersion Experience

A friend of mine recently introduced me to a program called A Path To True Joy. I resisted at first because I thought the title was hokey. Getting past that initial resistance and listening to the program has allowed me to reach the next level in my personal evolution.

We start with an assumption that most scientists and the personal development crowd will agree with, that physical matter is not really there. Science has shown mathematically that physical matter is made up of empty space. The physical world is an illusion in the form of a hologram that we're fully immersed in.

The hologram is written by another aspect of your self, your Expanded Self (ES). ES writes the full-immersion holographic movie you call your life. You and your ES have somehow acquired the privilege of playing the Human Game. ES writes what you the Player experience, and gives the hologram Energy to make it seem real to you, the self-aware game piece.

Life really is a game, designed by you, to provide emotional experiences exactly and specifically for you. Your Life is all about what you feel, not the details that make you feel it.

Go to www.HumanHints.com to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has studied many avenues of alternative thought. HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you chose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

HumanHints.com, PO Box 997, Vail, CO 81658
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Why the Taliban gave me a Christmas tree



Walking my cat (no leash) and viewing Christmas decorations in my neighborhood last year, I came to a house bedecked with evergreen boughs, red ribbons, and strings of colored lights. I was taken aback. I knew the woman who lives there is an Iranian, a Shiite Muslim. "Strange," I thought.

When her husband appeared in the yard, I commented on the oddity of Christmas decorations at a Shiite household. He shot back, "I'm Jewish."

"Whoa! You're Jewish, your wife is an Iranian Muslim, and you decorate your house for Christmas?" He shrugged and said, "Hey, we see Christmas as an international holiday." "Only in America," I muttered, following my cat.

Except that's not true. My neighbor was right: Christmas is international secular and religious. Christmas Eve in the Holy Land At this time of year, I often recall the Christmas Eves I spent in the Holy Land, while on assignment for CNN. The night before Christmas, my TV crew and I would make the annual pilgrimage to Palestinian Bethlehem to broadcast church services and celebrations live from Manger Square. It was wall-to-wall celebrants. Many were Muslims who just wanted a good party. In a land where Palestinians have little to celebrate, Muslims had no guilt about making merry over Christianity's central holiday.

My Palestinian producer, Sausanne Ghosheh, bubbled as she sang and danced in the wintry high desert night under Christmas lights strung above Manger Square. A Sunni Muslim, she made a point of telling me how much she loved Christmas and how she and her Palestinian friends always celebrated it as children.

I will always remember my hefty sabra cameraman, Yehuda Chemel, singing "Jingle Bells/ Jingle Bells/ Jingle all the way" in a very pronounced Israeli accent, whenever we drove through Israel during the two weeks before Christmas. It was a rite of the season. Sure, it wasn't as reverent as "The First Noel," but it suggested Christmas is infectious.

Not just a religious holiday Christmas is not just a religious holiday. It's a power. It transcends

cultures, politics, and religion. At the height of the cold war in the officially godless Soviet Union, the atheistic Russian Communists never failed to provide free Christmas trees to their perceived adversaries in the Western news media. The Jewish state of Israel always did the same, delivering free Christmas trees from kibbutzim to the goys. Once, while living in Jerusalem, I recall a Jewish friend asking if he could bring his three children to our apartment to see our Christmas tree after it was decorated. They had never seen one before.

Here in northern Virginia, my neighbors the Jewish husband and the Iranian Shiite wife — clearly understood that Christmas belongs to whomever wants to partake of it to the degree they wish to celebrate.

One thing you can take to the bank, this Christmas, as in all the others, my Jewish friends in Israel will telephone and e-mail to wish my wife and me a Merry Christmas.

It doesn't make them less Jewish any more than my Shiite neighbor becomes less Muslim because she decorates her house at Christmas. Cultural cowardice So why do Americans who love Christmas shudder at the thought of buying and sending seasonal cards reading "Merry Christmas?"

IN PICTURES: Animals ready for the holidays What is it about uttering those words that produces guilt among some Americans? It is cultural cowardice. But there can be no true religious coexistence within a culture as long as one sect feels duty bound to cower.

My wife once chanced upon a greeting card store with a sign in the window that read in effect, "In order not to offend our non-Christian customers, our cards this year will not say Merry Christmas."

To say 'Merry Christmas' Mine is not a call for mangers to spring up in government buildings or for public school children to be forced to observe a religious holiday. That's the tyranny of the majority over the minority. But discouraging a verbal greeting of "Merry Christmas" is also tyranny. It's oppressive and discriminatory. It gags free speech and curtails religious freedom. □

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Venezuela congress grants Chavez decree powers

FABIOLA SANCHEZ,

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan lawmakers granted President Hugo Chavez broad powers Friday to enact laws by decree, undermining the clout of a new congress that takes office next month with a bigger opposition bloc.

Chavez opponents condemned the move as a power grab, saying the law will be a blank check for the leftist leader to rule without consulting lawmakers.

The National Assembly approved the special powers for 18 months.

A new congress goes into session Jan. 5 with an opposition contingent large enough to hinder approval of some types of major laws. Opposition lawmakers say decree powers now give Chavez a blank check to rule

autocratically while ignoring the congress.

Chavez has argued he needs decree powers to fast-track funds to help the victims of recent floods and landslides, and also to hasten Venezuela's transition to a socialist state.

The president's critics view the law as one of many controversial measures being pushed through in the final weeks of a lame-duck congress.

Another measure under discussion Friday was the revised "Social Responsibility Law," which would impose broadcast-type regulations on the Internet and ban online messages "that could incite or promote hatred," create "anxiety" in the population or "disrespect public authorities." Questions remain about how the Internet regulations would be enforced.

"They're accusing me of being

a dictator," Chavez had said of the decree powers on state television Thursday night, dismissing the criticism as unfounded. "We're building a new democracy here that can't be turned back."

The law to grant Chavez decree powers, the fourth such legislation of his nearly 12-year presidency, also will allow him to unilaterally enact measures involving telecommunications, the banking system, information technology, the military, rural and urban land use, and the country's "socio-economic system."

Among the planned decrees already announced, Chavez intends to increase the value-added tax, now 12 percent, to raise funds for coping with the disaster caused by weeks of heavy rains. The government is erecting tents to house thousands left homeless and



Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez salutes upon his arrival to the Fort Tiuna military base to welcome Ecuador's President Rafael Correa in Caracas, Venezuela, Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2010. Correa comes to Venezuela for a one-day visit.

Associated Press

is accelerating public housing construction.

Critics accuse Chavez of taking advantage of the disaster to tighten his grip on power.

"Once again the government shows its authoritarian,

arbitrary and antidemocratic character," newly elected lawmaker Tomas Guanipa said in a statement.

Chavez has enjoyed near total control of the National Assembly since the opposition boycotted 2005 elections. □



The Human rights activists hang a sign on the wall of the state prosecutors office to protest the killing of Marisela Escobedo Ortiz in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Friday Dec. 17, 2010.

OLIVIA TORRES

Associated Press

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico (AP) — Gunmen killed a mother who had been protesting for three days in front of a governor's office in

northern Mexico to demand justice for her slain daughter, authorities said Friday.

Masked men pulled up in a car Thursday night and shot Marisela Escobedo Ortiz in the head in front of the

Mexico mom killed demanding justice for slain teenage daughter

governor's office in Chihuahua city, capital of Chihuahua state, said Jorge Gonzalez, special state prosecutor for crime prevention.

Surveillance cameras around the government building showed gunmen getting out of the car and Escobedo running into the street toward the governor's palace, but one of the gunmen chased her down and shot her — an image transmitted repeatedly on national television broadcasts. A spokesman for the state attorney general's office, Carlos Gonzalez, said the gunmen exchanged angry words with Escobedo's brother

just before the shooting. He said investigators believe one of them is Sergio Barraza, who had been the main suspect the killing of Escobedo's 17-year-old daughter. He was absolved by a court in April for lack of evidence. Escobedo was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where she died within minutes. She had been campaigning for a conviction in the killing of her daughter, Rubi Frayre Escobedo, whose burned and dismembered remains were found in a trash bin in the border city of Ciudad Juarez on June 18, 2009. She had been missing for nearly a year. Escobedo had staged

numerous marches, once wearing no clothes, wrapped only in a banner with her daughter's photograph.

"This struggle is not only for my daughter," Escobedo said then through a megaphone, her voice breaking. "Let's not allow one more young woman to be killed in this city."

Three days ago, Escobedo planted herself in front of the offices of Gov. Cesar Duarte and vowed not to move until investigators showed progress in the case. In an interview with the newspaper El Diario on Sunday, Escobedo said she had received death threats from Barraza's family. □

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CIA chief pulled from Pakistan; drones kill 54

ADAM GOLDMAN

CHRIS BRUMMITT

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The CIA yanked its top spy out of Pakistan after his cover was blown and his life threatened, and 54 suspected militants were killed in a U.S. drone missile attack Friday in stark new signs of the troubled relationship between mistrustful allies locked in a war on terror groups.

The CIA's decision to remove its Islamabad station chief comes at a pivotal moment. The Obama administration is pressing Pakistan to rid its lawless northwest frontier of militants, even as public outcry in the country has intensified against the U.S. spy agency's unacknowledged drone war.

The station chief's outing has spurred questions whether Pakistan's spy service might have leaked the information. The name emerged publicly from a Pakistani man who has threatened to sue the CIA over the deaths of his son and brother in a 2009 drone missile strike. A lawsuit filed last month in New York City in connection with the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, India, also may have raised tensions, by naming Pakistan's intelligence chief as a defendant.

A Pakistani intelligence officer said the country's intelligence service knew the identity of the station chief, but had "no clue" how the name was leaked. The officer spoke on condition of anonymity because his agency, like many around the world, does not allow its operatives to be named in the media.

CIA airstrikes in Pakistan from unmanned aircraft have eliminated terrorist leaders but also have led to accusations that the strikes kill innocent civilians. The U.S. does not acknowledge the missile attacks, but there have been more than 110 this year — more than double last year's total.

The 54 suspected militants killed Friday died in three American drone attacks close to the Afghan border. The high death toll included commanders of a Taliban-affiliated group who were holding a meeting when the missiles struck.

Drone strikes were at issue last November when a Pakistani man, Kareem Khan, and his lawyers, held a news conference, saying they would seek a \$500 million payment in two weeks for the deaths of Khan's son and brother, or they would sue CIA director Leon Panetta, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and the man they identified as the CIA's station chief in Islamabad. The Pakistanis said they would sue for "wrongful death" in a Pakistani court, but the lawsuit has yet to be filed. □



South Korean protesters stage a rally denouncing North Korea's live-fire drills on Yeonpyeong Island in front of the United Nations, UN, building during heavy snowfall, in Geneva, Switzerland, on Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

Associated Press

KOREA

Continued from Front Page

South Korea has said it plans one-day, live-fire drills sometime between Saturday and Tuesday on Yeonpyeong, a tiny island that is home to fishing communities and military bases and sits just seven miles from North Korean shores. Seoul says the drills' timing will depend on weather and other factors and, despite the North's threats, the exercises will go ahead as planned. The North, which claims nearby waters and has said it considers such drills an infringement of its territory, responded to similar firing exercises by raining artillery shells on Yeonpyeong, killing two marines and two construction workers.

The assault was the first by the North to target a civilian area since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, and it has caused anger and shock in the South, where TV screens and newspapers were filled with stunning images of islanders fleeing their bombed-out, burning homes.

A senior North Korean military official said in comments carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency that if South Korea goes ahead with more drills on Yeonpyeong, "unpredictable self-defensive strikes will be made."

"The intensity and scope of the strike will be more serious than the Nov. 23 (shelling)," the

North said in the notice that was sent to South Korean military officials Friday.

The North said the planned drills are an attempt "to save the face of the South Korean military, which met a disgraceful fiasco" during last month's clash.

South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's government has faced stinging criticism that his military was unprepared for the attack and reacted too slowly and too weakly. He has since replaced his defense minister and vowed to boost troops and weapons on islands along the Koreas' disputed western sea border.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said Friday that the North's threats wouldn't stop the planned drills. Seoul has said they are part of "routine, justified" exercises and has warned that it is prepared to deal with any North Korean attack. Representatives of the American-led U.N. Command that oversees the armistice that ended the Korean War will observe the drills.

The tough words from the Koreas came as a high-profile U.S. state governor visited North Korea on Friday.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, who has frequently been an unofficial envoy to the North, said he wanted to visit the North's main nuclear complex and meet with senior officials during his four-day trip, though details of his schedule were unclear. □

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Ahead of time, Toys for Tots thanks each and everyone for helping us realize this project.

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Hopkins ready to make ring history

DAN GELSTON,
AP Sports Writer
PHILADELPHIA (AP)

— Bernard Hopkins will become the oldest boxer to win a world title if he beats WBC light heavyweight champion Jean Pascal on Saturday.

He's trying to knock out George Foreman from atop the record book: The grill guru was 45 years, 10 months when he knocked out heavyweight champion Michael Moorer in 1994.

"I want everyone to know this is unique," said Hopkins, who turns 46 on Jan. 15.

Hardly hobbled or slurring his speech like so many of his peers, Hopkins remains in elite physical condition and in contention for championship fights.

"A lot of people are going to have to adjust their books after this fight, after this one-sided fight," Hopkins said.

Known as "The Executioner," Hopkins talks like an athlete in his prime even if the Philadelphia fighter's best rounds in the ring are also behind him.

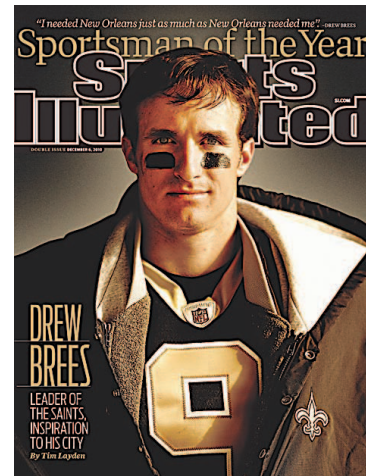
Continued on Page B6

"I am deeply sorry..."

AP top sports story

This Feb. 19, 2010, file photo shows Tiger Woods pausing during a news conference, in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. Woods' humbling return to the public eye, from his televised confession to a winless season on the golf course, was voted the sports story of the year by members of The Associated Press.

*Associated Press
Page B7*



In an image provided by Sports Illustrated, New Orleans Saints quarterback is shown on the cover of Sports Illustrated, which honored Brees as its sportsman of the year Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2010.

Drew Brees is AP's Male Athlete of the Year

By BRETT MARTEL

AP Sports Writer

NEW ORLEANS — Drew Brees has New Orleans swinging, singing and trumpeting their Saints like never before.

When the Rebirth Brass Band tears it up during one of their late night shows at a funky old neighborhood bar, the tin-walled place bounces to a drum beat and a tuba's bass line.

Continued on Page B3

NFL Preview: Lots of playoff implications in NFL Week 15

BARRY WILNER

AP Pro Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Jacksonville Jaguars have a chance to dethrone AFC champion Indianapolis and clinch a division ruled seemingly forever by Peyton Manning and the Colts — if they beat them on Sunday.

"This is a big opportunity for the franchise," Jaguars guard Uche Nwaneri said. "It's been a long time since we had a game against the Colts where it's really going to pretty much decide everything for the division. We're not going to make this something that takes us

out of our rhythm, but we understand what's on the line and we're looking forward to the challenge." The Jaguars are built around a ball-control offense, led by running back Maurice Jones-Drew, and a defense designed to make the Colts one-dimensional. They hired an unyielding coach who thrives on physical football, and yet it's never been quite enough to take down the Colts. Until now, maybe.

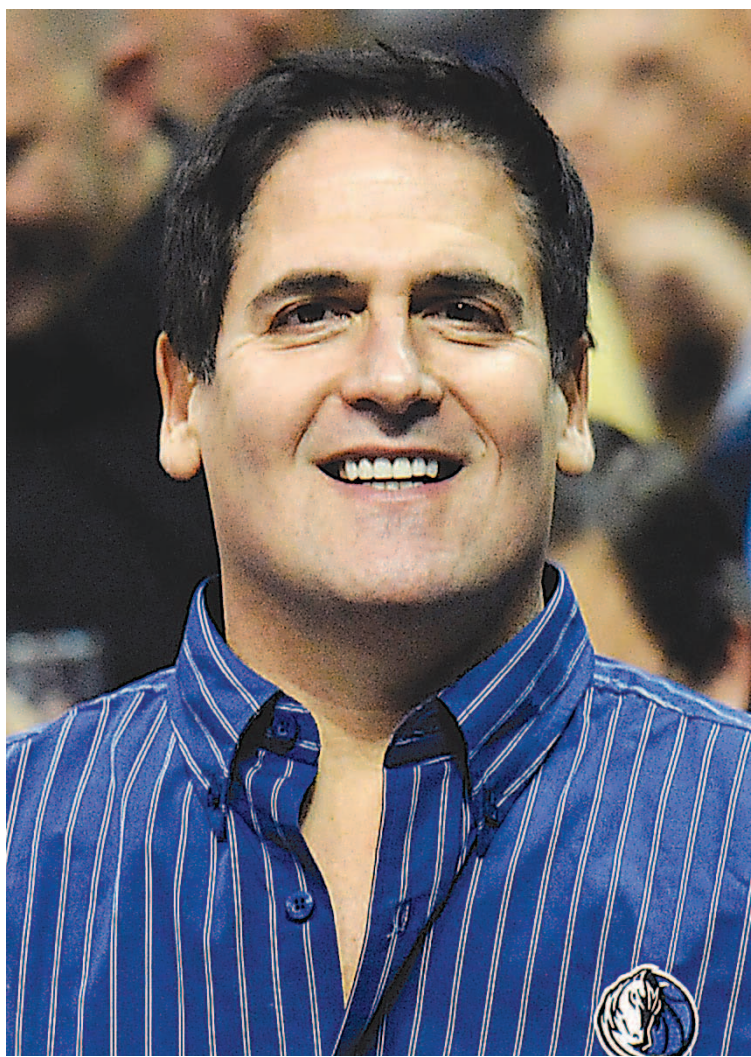
A win would make Jacksonville the first team other than Indianapolis or Tennessee to win the AFC South crown since the division's creation in 2002.

Continued on Page B4



Jacksonville Jaguars running back Maurice Jones-Drew (32) scores on a 30-yard run against the Oakland Raiders during the fourth quarter of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 12, 2010, in Jacksonville, Fla. Jaguars beat the Raiders 38-30.

Associated Press



In this Nov. 3, 2010, file photo, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban looks on during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets in Denver.

Associated Press

Cuban understands hurdles to college football playoff

NEW YORK — Mark Cuban acknowledges any attempt to fund a college football playoff would be a “long and difficult and expensive process,” but he’s committed to examining the idea.

The Dallas Mavericks owner said this week that he was in the exploratory stages of trying to bankroll a 12- or 16-team playoff to replace the often-criticized Bowl Championship Series. His idea was met with derision from some, including BCS executive director Bill Hancock, who doubted “financial inducements” would lead to an overhaul of the postseason system. Cuban responded in an online blog Friday by saying, “There is quite a bit of satisfaction in taking on Goliath. This undertaking is no different. Win or lose (and I hate to lose), it will be worth the journey.”

Cuban said he has a lot of homework to do before he’s ready to take the next step in the process.

“I’ve got a lot of work to do,” Cuban said before the Mavericks’ game Friday night against the Phoenix Suns. “There’s a lot of learning I have to do before I even begin to think about presenting something.”

In his blog, Cuban mentioned an anonymous email he received from someone who claimed to own a patent for a playoff system.

“It’s like having a patent on tying your shoes,” Cuban said. “But it’s all through the technology industry now. It’s horrific, and that’s not an understatement, and its impact on the economy.”

Cuban said he’s not surprised that the majority of online feedback he’s received has been supportive of his willingness to explore a workable alternative to the BCS.

“That’s one of the reasons I said it publicly is because I wanted to get feedback and ideas,” Cuban said. “I knew people would have opinions, and that’s the goal.” □

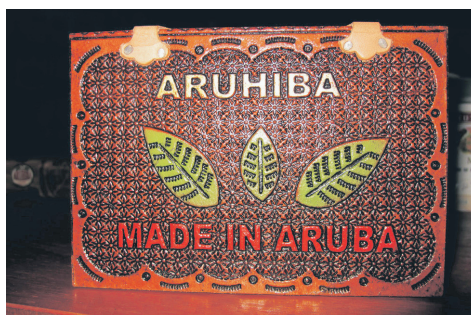
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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called “Aruhiba”. These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is specially designed for the cigars with the logo “Aruhiba”. Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five



cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open from Monday to Saturday from 9am till 8:30pm. And open on Sunday from 9am to 1pm. At the Tamarijn Hotel open on Monday till Saturday 12pm to 8pm. And on Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores. Visit our authentic tobacco farm where cigars are handmade.



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ATHLETE OF THE YEAR *Continued from page B1*

Their song goes like this: “We used to say ‘Who dat’ since way back when / Now we’re saying ‘We dat’ every time we win / You can write it down, take a picture, tell a friend / We already done it. We’re gonna do it again.”

Brees is a big reason New Orleanians can smile and boast. Not only did the reigning Super Bowl MVP turn around the Saints’ football fortunes and bring the city its first NFL championship in February, he’s become a civic leader as his adoptive hometown recovers from a time of turmoil and suffering. That record of accomplishment is why the down-to-earth quarterback was voted the 2010 Male Athlete of the Year, chosen by members of The Associated Press.

There were 176 ballots submitted from U.S. news organizations that make up the AP’s membership. Brees received 48 votes, while the 2009 AP Male Athlete of the Year, NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson, finished second with 31. Boxer Manny Pacquiao was third with 21 votes, followed by Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Roy Halladay with 17. Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Michael Vick, a comeback story himself, rounded out the top five vote-getters with 10.

The award was announced Friday.

“I’ve always tried to visualize myself in that position of being considered one of the best and winning championships,” said Brees, who won his first title in his ninth NFL season. “Certainly the way you’re perceived, the way people talk about you, the kind of category they put you in — that stuff changes and it’s flattering, certainly humbling.”

Brees is only the fourth quarterback to receive the honor in the past four decades, along with the Patriots’ Tom Brady in 2007, the 49ers’ Joe Montana in 1989 and 1990, and the Raiders’ George Blanda in 1970.

The place Brees finds himself now is even more remarkable when you consider that he came to New Orleans having been unceremoniously discarded by the San Diego Chargers after a career-threatening injury to his throwing shoulder. New Orleans was at its nadir in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the Saints needed a lift and their new, undersized quarterback was looking for a second chance.

Brees embraces the chance to talk about those moments, because in his mind, they are linked with the success that followed.

“I believe that 100 percent. New Orleans is the last place I ever thought I’d be,” Brees said. “The Saints organization and team didn’t have that great a reputation prior to (2006) and so it was probably not the most attractive place for anybody to come. Then right after the storm, the city’s destroyed and everybody’s displaced and I look back on those times and it was like we were really starting over.”

Nearly five years later, many are now familiar with how Brees rebuilt his arm, his career, his team and even helped rebuild New Orleans through millions of dollars in charitable contributions.

Since 2006, he has thrown for more yards (22,153) and touchdowns (150) than any NFL quarterback and in the process set club records in both categories. His 70.6 completion percentage in 2009 set a single-season NFL record.

He took the Saints to their first NFC title game in his

first season with the club and to a championship in his fourth with a 31-17 win over the Indianapolis Colts in Miami. Brees completed 32 of 39 passes for 288 yards and two TDs in the Super Bowl without an interception. Now the Saints are 10-3, hitting double-digit wins for the third time in five seasons and in another playoff race.

Brees deflects much of the credit for his prolific production to head coach Sean Payton, who believed in Brees like few others did, and who designed his offense to suit Brees’ strengths.

Payton, however, is quick to assert that the signing of Brees was the single most important step toward building a Super Bowl champion.

“It starts with his skill set,” said Payton, who calls the plays. “You’re a good play-caller when you have a good quarterback and I’ve been a bad play-caller before.”

During the offseason, Brees wrote a book that made best-seller lists, he did the talk show circuit and appeared on the cover of the popular Madden video game.

He is in elite company now, more famous and celebrated than ever, and busier than ever since the birth of his second son in October. Yet he’s retained his regular-guy appeal.

“He’s a down-to-earth regular cat,” Rebirth saxophone player Vincent Broussard said. “He doesn’t live too big.”

Recently, Brees found time to drop by Lusher Charter School, a high school where athletic fields and the weight room were restored by his foundation, to give an impromptu pep talk to the team before its first playoff game. He still ventures into Audubon Park near his renovated, historic home, chatting with fans and posing



This photo made Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010, shows New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees during an interview with the Associated Press at their NFL football training facility in Metairie, La. Brees was voted the 2010 Male Athlete of the Year, chosen by members of The Associated Press, Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

Associated Press

for photos, even if it means pulling nearly 2-year-old son Baylen into the photo to avoid losing track of him.

“I know that whenever I go out in public I’m fair game, and that’s fine,” Brees said. “I’m happy to take pictures with people and sign autographs and that kind of thing.”

Teammates say success and fame haven’t changed Brees at all.

“If anything it’s given him more opportunities to exhibit who he really is,” right tackle Jon Stinchcomb said.

The Brees Dream foundation has raised more than \$6 million, with much of that spent on fixing up schools, playgrounds, parks and athletic fields in New Orleans, as well as supporting cancer research, a local residential facility for cancer patients and funding youth programs.

Then there are Brees’ other activities, such as sitting on the board of the National World War II Museum and supporting the Idea Village, which helps young entrepreneurs start up businesses in New Orleans.

Brees’ wife, Brittany, tries to make it easier for her husband to juggle his various pursuits during football season. Sometimes she brings Baylen and little brother, Bowen, to Saints headquarters to see

their father so he doesn’t feel pressured to rush home before bedtime when there’s still more film study to be done.

“Drew is that kind of person that I worry when he’s not really busy,” she said. “He doesn’t know how to come home and just sit. When we’d go on vacation before we had kids, he was throwing the ball to me. I had to catch the ball for him because he didn’t want to get rusty and I’m getting my hands cut up from the laces. ... Thank God he has two boys.”

As for all the hero worship her husband receives, Brittany said that, while she was never fond of the term “Breesus” used by some fans, she likes seeing his hard work appreciated. She takes pride in letters left inside their gate from parents, thanking Brees for teaching their children how to conduct themselves with class not just after big wins but bad losses as well.

“I really feel like it hasn’t changed who he is,” she said. “I think what has changed is that sense of responsibility, that empowerment level where you realize you kind of have this light shone on you while you’re in the NFL for a short amount of time and you want to do as much as you can for the greater good.” □

Garnett stars in Celtics' 12th straight win



Boston Celtics guard Nate Robinson (4) celebrates his three-pointer with teammate Marquis Daniels, rear, against the Atlanta Hawks during the second half of their NBA basketball game in Boston, Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010. Robinson started in place of Rajon Rondo, who sprained his ankle in a game against the Knicks on Wednesday night. The Celtics beat the Hawks 102-90.

Associated Press

NBA Roundup

BOSTON (AP) — Kevin Garnett had 17 points and 13 rebounds — one of three Boston players with a double-double — to lead the Celtics to their 12th straight NBA win, 102-90 over the Atlanta Hawks on Thursday. Paul Pierce had 15 points and 10 assists and Glen Davis had 18 points and 10 rebounds.

Atlanta's Marvin Williams had a season-best 26 points and Jeff Teague scored 18. Boston point guard Rajon Rondo missed the game with a sprained ankle and is expected to be sidelined at least a week. Center Shaquille O'Neal was also out, missing his fourth straight game with a calf strain.

Boston led by six points

entering the final quarter, but the Hawks closed within 77-75. The Celtics then scored seven straight points, making it 84-77 with just under eight minutes to play and set up victory.

In Newark, New Jersey, the hosts snapped an eight-game losing slump by beating Washington.

Devin Harris had 29 points and nine assists and Brook Lopez added 18 points for the Nets, who led by 23 points in the second quarter.

The loss was the 13th straight on the road this season for the Wizards, who played without top overall draft pick John

Wall and forward Andray Blatche, both of whom have knee problems.

Reserve Nick Young led the Wizards with 22 points.

In Denver, Manu Ginobili sparked the Spurs to a big fourth-quarter lead and he drew the foul that negated Carmelo Anthony's winning basket in San Antonio's escape from the Nuggets.

The Spurs led 111-108 with 8 seconds left when Anthony got behind the defense for a dunk. Antonio McDyess' inbound pass was deflected by J.R. Smith off Ginobili's head and into the arms of Anthony, whose basket gave

the Nuggets a 112-111 lead with 7.1 seconds left.

Ginobili's running bank shot at 4.2 seconds put the Spurs back on top 113-112.

After a timeout, Anthony got the inbound pass from Ty Lawson and drove the lane. He ran over Ginobili as he made a buzzer-beater that was called off for an offensive foul.

After a review, the officials put .4 seconds back on the clock, and the Spurs inbounded the ball for the win.

In other NBA games it was New Jersey 97, Washington 89; Boston 102, Atlanta 90; and San Antonio 113, Denver 112. □

NFL PREVIEW

Continued from Page B1

Plus, the Jaguars could be celebrating the title on their nemesis' home field.

It's a potentially sweet scenario, but one the Jags prefer to downplay as they visit a city where they've won only twice.

The New England Patriots, who host the Green Bay Packers, are the only team already into the NFL playoffs.

Four other division leaders beside the Jaguars — the Pittsburgh Steelers, Atlanta Falcons, New York Giants, Chicago Bears — can earn playoff spots this weekend. The Patriots and Steelers even could gain first-round byes.

Among the marquee matchups in Week 15, Missouri neighbors the Kansas City Chiefs and St. Louis Rams meet with a victory going a long way to boosting each other's playoff bids.

Kansas City, at 8-5, has a half-game lead over the San Diego Chargers — 8-6 after their 34-7 home victory over San Francisco on Thursday — in the AFC West with three games remaining, all against mediocre teams. The Chiefs have lost five of seven road games while the Rams, co-leaders of the NFC West with Seattle, are 4-2 at home.

The Chiefs have a nine-game winning streak against NFC West teams since 2002, including 3-0 this year. And they could get back quarterback Matt



Cassel, who missed last week's loss at San Diego because of an appendectomy; they desperately need him considering backup Brodie Croyle never has won an NFL start. The Rams' offense is awakening and their defense has been formidable for much of this turnaround season; they were 1-15 last year. Top draft pick Sam Bradford needs 116 yards passing to become the third rookie in NFL history with 3,000 yards, and Steven Jackson has rushed for more than 1,000 yards for the sixth straight year.

"I think the team's at a state of mind where we feel confident enough that these next three games we can compete," Jackson said. "That's what you want to see. You don't want to see guys walking around afraid to make a mistake or allowing the pressure to kind of put them in a bad spot."

The Philadelphia Eagles visit the Giants with identical 9-4 records, and neither would be eliminated with a loss, and would remain a strong

contender for a playoff wildcard berth. Indeed, neither team can clinch the NFC East with a win at the Meadowlands, but the Eagles get a big jump if they can sweep New York and win their sixth in a row against the Giants, including the playoffs.

The Giants are banged-up at receiver — losing go-to target Steve Smith for the season is damaging — but they're running the ball crisply with Brandon Jacobs and Ahmad Bradshaw. No defense is equipped better to keep the reins on Eagles passer Michael Vick, but his favorite receiver DeSean Jackson, if healthy, is a nightmarish matchup for New York's secondary.

Sunday's lineup also has New York Jets at Pittsburgh, New Orleans at Baltimore, Atlanta at Seattle, Detroit at Tampa Bay, Buffalo at Miami, Denver at Oakland, Arizona at Carolina, Washington at Dallas, Houston at Tennessee, and Cleveland at Cincinnati. On Monday, Chicago is at Minnesota. □

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VJax catches 3 TD passes from Rivers to lead Bolts

By BERNIE WILSON

AP Sports Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The San Diego Chargers have regained their December swagger, thanks to Vincent Jackson's return and a smash-mouth defense.

Jackson caught a career-high three touchdown passes, Philip Rivers surpassed 4,000 yards passing for the third straight season and the Chargers beat Alex Smith and the San Francisco 49ers 34-7 on Thursday night to stay alive in the AFC West race.

Jackson reminded the Chargers just what they missed when he sat out 10 games during a nasty contract dispute. "Since I've been here, it's like I had never left," said Jackson, who had his first three TD grabs of the season, of 58, 11 and 21 yards.

"He seems to be in midseason form," Rivers said. "I feel like he's been here for 15 weeks. That's a credit to the way he practices."

The Chargers (8-6) pulled within a half-game of AFC West leader Kansas City (8-5), which lost 31-0 at San Diego on Sunday.

San Francisco was probably the toughest test left for the Chargers, who finish with games at Cincinnati (2-11) and Denver (3-10). If San Diego wins out and the Chiefs lose once, the Chargers will win their fifth straight division title.

The Chargers came within 4:26 of having consecutive

shutouts for the first time in their 51-year history.

The 49ers (5-9) could wind up 7-9 and in a three-way tie and still win the NFC West, the NFL's weakest division.

Rivers and Jackson came out early in the fourth quarter and the Chargers leading 31-0.

Rivers was 19 of 25 for 273 yards, giving him 4,141 for the season. He tied Hall of Famer Dan Fouts' team record set from 1979-81. Jackson had five catches for 112 yards.

"He and Phil have such a good rapport," center Nick Hardwick said. "They both know what's going on, and they've studied for hours together. We were expecting him to come in and explode, and that's what he's done. He's a beast. He does things other players can't do, and he did it tonight."

Unhappy that the Chargers didn't give him a long-term deal, Jackson sat out the first seven games. He then missed three more games while serving a team-imposed suspension. The move cost him some \$3 million in salary. When he returned at Indianapolis on Nov. 28, he pulled a calf muscle two plays in and was done for the night and the next game.

On the fourth play from scrimmage, Rivers wound up and threw deep. The 6-foot-5 Jackson slowed down and reached out over 6-foot Nate Clements' head to make the catch at about the 15 before outracing the cornerback into the end zone.



Jackson exploited a mismatch against linebacker Takeo Spikes for an easy 11-yard catch just before halftime.

Jackson pulled in a 21-yarder early in the fourth quarter, getting the ball just past the pylon. The play was upheld after a review.

Mike Tolbert had a 1-yard TD run in the third quarter and Nate Kaeding kicked field goals of 25 and 39 yards. Smith fell far short of having the happy homecoming he was hoping for. Coming off a promising return following a five-game absence, he was 19 of 29 for 165 yards with one interception and was sacked six times.

"We wanted it bad," linebacker Brandon Siler said of the shutout that just eluded the Bolts. "We were saying on the sideline, 'Don't give up anything cheap.' It hurts a little bit, but I think we already know we're a good

defense. We proved that."

San Francisco's only score came on Brian Westbrook's 3-yard run with 4:26 left.

The 49ers watched as both a field goal and a touchdown came off the scoreboard in a span of four plays early in the second quarter.

Jeff Reed kicked a 38-yard field goal but San Diego's Antonio Garay was whistled for unnecessary roughness for trying to gain leverage, giving the 49ers first-and-goal at the 10. Smith scrambled and dove at the left pylon on third down and it was ruled a touchdown. The Chargers challenged and it was reversed, with Smith ruled down inches from the goal line. On fourth down at the 1, Siler threw Anthony Dixon for a 2-yard loss.

"I just read the play and got

in there," Siler said. "I think it takes the energy and the momentum out of a team when you do something like that."

Said Smith: "It continued to get one-dimensional for us. When you play a defense of that caliber, they're the No. 1 defense for a reason. They played well."

Smith was playing against his hometown Chargers for the first time in the regular season. Michael Crabtree had just three catches for 17 yards and Pro Bowl tight end Vernon Davis didn't have a catch until the waning minutes, finishing with one for 4 yards.

"This team has highs and lows, but if we are fortunate enough to go to the playoffs, I think we deserve to go," 49ers coach Mike Singletary said. □

Canadiens back on track; beat Bruins

MONTREAL (AP) — The Montreal Canadiens won their first game in four by edging the Boston Bruins 4-3 in the NHL on Thursday.

Max Pacioretty had a goal and an assist and Scott Gomez also had two points for Montreal. Michael Cammalleri scored on a penalty shot 1:04 in while Maxim Lapierre and Brian Gionta also scored for the Canadiens, who remained alone in first place in the Northeast Division with 40 points.

Boston's Marc Savard and Patrice Bergeron each had a goal and an assist. Blake Wheeler also scored.

Rangers 4, Coyotes 3

In New York, rookie Derek Stepan scored the tying goal late in regulation and Erik Christensen netted the only goal in the shootout as New York rallied for victory over Phoenix.

Martin Biron turned aside three attempts in the shootout to make Christensen's first-round tally stand up.

Dan Girardi had a goal and assist, and Brandon Prust scored a short-handed goal for New York. Taylor Pyatt and Adrian Aucoin scored in the opening 6 minutes, and Martin Hanzal added a goal in the second period for the Coyotes. Sharks 4, Stars 3, OT

In Dallas, Logan Couture's power-play goal 1:20 into overtime gave San Jose a victory over Dallas.

The rookie scored his 15th of the season on a shot from the high slot that got past screened goalie Kari Lehtonen.

Devin Setoguchi, back after missing nine games with an upper-body injury, scored twice for the Sharks. □

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Boxer Bernard Hopkins trains in a Quebec City hotel on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010. Haitian-born Jean Pascal is to defend his WBC light heavyweight title against Hopkins on Saturday at the Pepsi Colisee in Quebec City.

Associated Press

HOPKINS

Continued from Page B1

Hopkins, who once promised his mother he'd retire at 40, went to the scorecard to defeat journeyman Enrique Ornelas last December and won a grueling unanimous decision against Roy Jones Jr. in April. Hopkins did what he needed to do in each fight to win, even as he failed to inspire confidence that another lengthy title run was still ahead — he once had a perfect 10-year reign as middleweight champion. Hopkins started boxing in a Pennsylvania state prison, where he served five years beginning at the age of 17. He turned pro in 1988 and won his first bout in 1990.

The fighter who boldly talked last year of retiring as the heavyweight champion has backed off that prediction. In fact, Hopkins has hinted that if he loses to Pascal in Quebec City, it might seriously signal the end of his 22-year career.

For real, this time.

"If Bernard Hopkins don't win this fight, and win this fight impressively, there's nothing else to do," Hopkins said. "I won't be a name for an opponent."

He was for the Haitian-born Pascal. The 28-year-old Pascal stood in the ring after his victory over Chad Dawson in August and proclaimed that he wanted to fight Hopkins next.

"It's going to be a good start for me to beat a legend to become a legend one day," Pascal said. "Hopkins was the name out there, was the big name and that's why I chose to fight him because I want to fight the best to prove that I'm the best."

There is a nearly 18-year age gap between Hopkins and Pascal — the biggest difference in B-Hop's career. Hopkins had five bouts where his opponents had been more than a decade younger than him, including a 17-year gap in a victory over Kelly Pavlik in October 2008.

Pascal was only 5 years old when Hopkins turned pro in 1988.

"There's a lot of 40-year-olds running around, dropping

their canes, putting their teeth in and cheering for me," Hopkins said.

For all the wisecracks about his age, Hopkins is about as serious and dedicated as any athlete in his training. His straightedge lifestyle includes no drinking, healthy eating and going to bed by 9 p.m. "Instead of looking at 45 as a negative, I'm proud to say that as of today, I'm an example of good fortune and also taking care of your yourself," he said. "And knowing the art of boxing. The art boxing is plain and simple: Hit and not get hit." Around Philadelphia, he's simply known as B-Hop. He's stayed true to his roots, often training or holding workout camps at the various dingy, out-of-the-way gyms around the city. He has an apartment in the city, buys his groceries at the nearby market, and recites his exact running route which he hits daily without bodyguards or much fanfare. Hopkins offers a quick wave for fans who recognize him as he runs his way through the park.

"When they see me, they know it's B-Hop coming through," he said.

He won't be so popular in Canada. Quebec City is a lot closer to Pascal's adopted hometown of Laval, Quebec. "I'm at my best when I know that I'm walking into another guy's territory and the only thing he has to be is good," Hopkins said, "And I have to be supergood." □



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Woods saga voted AP sports story of year in U.S.

RACHEL COHEN

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tiger Woods' humbling return to the public eye, from his televised confession to a winless season on the golf course, was voted the sports story of the year in the United States by members of The Associated Press.

The fallout from Woods' admission of infidelity edged a very different sort of story: The New Orleans Saints winning their first Super Bowl championship, giving an emotional boost to their hurricane-ravaged city. The World Cup was fourth.

It was late 2009 when Woods' pristine image unraveled after he crashed his SUV into a tree outside his home, unleashing salacious revelations of extramarital affairs. The story was a late addition to last year's voting and wound up fifth.

But the twists and turns weren't over for Woods. Many more developments were still to unfold in 2010.

There were 176 ballots submitted from U.S. news organizations that make up the AP's membership. The voters were asked to rank the top 10 sports stories of the year, with the first-place story getting 10 points, the second-place story receiving nine points, and so on.

The Woods saga received 1,316 points, with the Saints' title getting 1,215 and the NBA free agency frenzy coming in third with 1,085.

Major League Baseball's ongoing travails with performance-enhancing drugs was the top story last year.

Here are 2010's top 10 stories:

— 1. **TIGER WOODS:** Woods returned to public view with a 13½-minute statement in February, then came back to golf at the Masters in April with a fourth-place finish. That would be one of his few highlights on the course — Woods went winless on the PGA Tour for the first time in his career and lost his No. 1 ranking for the first time in years. In August, he and Elin Nordegren divorced.

— 2. **SAINTS WIN:** New Orleans residents loved their Saints for not abandoning the



city after Hurricane Katrina, but it was hard to imagine the team bringing much joy on the field after 42 mostly losing seasons. Then Drew Brees and Co. upset the mighty Indianapolis Colts in their first Super Bowl, to the delight of French Quarter revelers and fans nationwide who adopted the Saints.

— 3. **FREE AGENCY FRENZY:** NBA fans were captivated by the mystery of where MVP LeBron James and other marquee free agents would land. Few would have guessed that three of them would sign with the same team: the Miami Heat, who became basketball's Evil Empire by adding James from Cleveland and Chris Bosh from Toronto to Dwyane Wade.

— 4. **WORLD CUP:** A World

Cup of firsts ended gloriously for Spain and for Africa. South Africa hosted the continent's first World Cup without the pitfalls many predicted. And the Spaniards brought home the first World Cup title to the football-mad country with a 1-0 victory over the Netherlands in extra time.

— 5. **GIANTS WIN:** The Giants hadn't won the World Series since they moved to San Francisco in 1958 — and since 1954 overall. This didn't seem to be the year to end the drought when they barely squeaked into the playoffs. But with dominant pitching and clutch hitting, they beat the Texas Rangers in five games.

— 6. **NFL CONCUSSIONS:** New posters distributed to teams before the season warned of concussions'

of concussions by players. Midseason, the NFL cracked down on helmet hits with huge fines and threatened suspensions.

— 7. **JIMMIE JOHNSON:** The NASCAR driver extended his record with his fifth straight Sprint Cup title. Perhaps most impressively, he did it despite not being in top form all season. Johnson became the first driver in the Chase's seven-year history to overcome a points deficit in the finale.

— 8. **BRETT FAVRE:** This comeback was nothing like last year's magical run to the NFC title game for the 41-year-old quarterback. His Minnesota Vikings struggled badly, and the NFL launched an investigation into whether he sent lewd photos of himself to a Jets employee. After voting began, his record streak of 297 starts ended.

— 9. **UCONN WINS:** The Huskies' women's basketball team extended their record winning streak to 78 games with a second straight national championship in April, becoming the first team to post consecutive unbeaten seasons. And Connecticut is a powerhouse again this season.

— 10. **WOODEN DIES:** The Wizard of Westwood died June 4 at the age of 99. John Wooden coached UCLA's men's basketball team to 10 NCAA championships, including seven in a row from 1967-73 and an 88-game winning streak. □

dangers in much harsher language than before. Another sign of how big the issue had become: increased reporting

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United States' Ryan Lochte celebrates winning the gold medal and setting a new World Record in the Men's 200m Individual Medley final at the FINA Short Course Swimming World Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, Dec. 17, 2010.

Associated Press

SPORTS BRIEFS

McDowell voted player of year by U.S. golf writers

HOUSTON (AP) — Graeme McDowell has picked up another award.

The U.S. Open champion has been voted player of the year by the Golf Writers Association of America.

McDowell received 87 votes to beat Jim Furyk (61) and Martin Kaymer (51). The Northern Irishman won three times this year and captured the decisive match in the Ryder Cup for Europe against the United States.

McDowell also won the Golf Writers Trophy from the British-based Association of Golf Writers. He shared European Tour player of the year with Kaymer.

Yani Tseng won female player of the year from the GWAA, topping Cristie Kerr and Ai Miyazato. Bernhard Langer was the overwhelming choice as the senior player of the year.

They will be honored April 6 in Augusta, Georgia. □

Nadal laments the damage caused by Contador's case

MADRID (AP) — Rafael Nadal says he hopes that Alberto Contador's doping case will be cleared up soon to stop the "tremendous damage" caused to all sports.

Nadal says on Spanish radio "all of this is horrible for other (athletes)."

The world's top-ranked tennis player cites cycling as the sport most affected by doping, in which "cases arise constantly." He says "it is tremendous the amount of damage this causes sport and the doubt it casts over other athletes." Contador, a three-time Tour de France champion, is under investigation for doping and faces a two-year ban. □

Lochte looks unbeatable after another world record

ANDREW DAMPF

AP Sports Writer

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Ryan Lochte has set two world records on consecutive nights and the American is just getting warmed up.

"There were a lot of mistakes I made and I can go a lot faster, I know that," Lochte said Friday after adding the 200-meter individual medley mark to his 400 record a day earlier at the short-course world championships. "It's just a matter of time where I finally have a perfect race."

While he may have not been completely satisfied with it, Lochte's latest victory was a dominant display. He touched in 1 minute, 50.08 seconds to improve on the previous mark set by South Africa's Darian Townsend by an astounding 1.5 seconds.

Lochte finished more than two bodylengths ahead of his closest competitor, Markus Rogan of Austria, who was 2.82 seconds behind. Another American, Tyler Clary, was third, 3.48 back.

"When I was doing backstroke I looked up on the screen and I saw how I was right in front of the world record line and that kind of motivated me," Lochte said.

"It pushed me in breaststroke and freestyle and I just came off that last wall, took a deep breath and just went in."

Rogan finished only 0.34 behind Lochte at a short-course yards meet in Ohio a couple of weeks ago. This time, the Austrian was so far behind he could only admire his rival.

"I watched him the whole race," Rogan said in his usual lighthearted manner. "I had the best seat in the house — nobody saw his feet like I did, nobody saw his turns. I've got to get that ticket again."

Lochte's two marks represent the only individual world records set in 2010 — either

in short- or long-course — after high-tech bodysuits were banned at the beginning of the year. By contrast, nearly every record in swimming was broken multiple times the previous two years.

Two other world records in relays were set the past two days.

"Lochte is not from this planet — he's a little freak," said sprinting standout Cesar Cielo. "I'm just glad I'm not an IMer. If he wants to swim the (sprints), I'm ready for him, but let's just let him take those world records for now."

Lochte has won all three of his individual events so far and he has two more remaining, plus possibly a relay.

"I never go in the race expecting world records," he said. "I'm just going out there having fun, and if me having fun puts me first with a world record, more power to me I guess."

Lochte took bronze medals in the 200 and 400 IMs at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, which were both won by Michael Phelps, who is skipping this meet.

Also Friday, Cielo showed a return to form with a dominant display in the 50 freestyle.

Cielo clocked 20.51 seconds in the two-lap race, 0.30 ahead of French rival Frederick Bousquet, with Josh Schneider of the United States third, 0.37 behind.

After winning the 50 in Beijing, Cielo then swept both sprints — the 50 and 100 — at last year's long-course worlds in Rome. But he failed to win over both distances at the Pan Pacific championships in August, where American sprinter Nathan Adrian prevailed.

"Swimming is like boxing — eventually you're going to get hit — but they didn't knock me out," said Cielo, who celebrated by slamming the water with his fist. "I'm up and I'm hitting them back. So if they want to win again they're going to have to bring some more." □

Yao out for season with stress fracture

KRISTIE RIEKEN,

AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston Rockets center Yao Ming will miss the rest of the season because of the stress fracture in his left ankle.

The Rockets announced the decision Friday, a day after the injury was found in an MRI exam. Team physician Walter Lowe says surgery is the usual treatment for such an injury, which has sidelined him since Nov. 10.

Yao is still consulting with doctors to determine how he will proceed. If he chooses surgery, it would take seven and 10 months for him to return to the court.

The seven-time All-Star sat out last season after surgery to repair his broken left foot. Rockets' general manager Daryl Morey says he is hopeful that Yao will recover and play for the Rockets in the future. □



Former teammates Houston Rockets' Yao Ming, left, of China, and Detroit Pistons' Tracy McGrady, right, hug before an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2010, in Houston.

Associated Press



THANKS FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

IBM predicts five big tech innovations coming by 2015

We already know that tablets are going to take a bite out of PC sales and robots will take over social networks, but what else is happening in the next five years? Well, IBM has a few guesses. The company recently unveiled its annual "Next Five in Five," showcasing five innovations it thinks will hit the tech market in the next five years. This year's list is filled with better batteries, 3D holograms, computer heat energy, better

GPS, and citizen scientists.

Here's the list:

Better batteries: Though battery capacity and power have traditionally only improved about 7 percent a year, IBM thinks we may see smaller batteries that last 10 times longer than today's.

3D holograms: We've reported on early holographic tests, but things will get a lot more real. 3D holograms will infect phones, TVs, and all sorts of screens, making 3D something consumers actually want. No glasses needed.

Computer heat: IBM hopes to harness the energy produced by massive farms of computer servers and use it to heat and cool other buildings. "In the data center, 50% of the energy is cooling the data center, and

a lot of that heat is just lost to us," said Don Campbell, Chief Technology Officer for Business Analytics at IBM. "A micro approach to passing water across the chip, pulling heat out of the chip and instead of getting rid of it, capturing, extracting and repurposing it, can lead to something as simple as driving a coffee maker in the lunch room, or as massive as heating a building in winter."

Personalized GPS: Android phones already have turn-by-turn navigation, but IBM predicts this technology can get a whole lot better by pulling real-time traffic data, advising alternate routes, and even telling you how many parking spots are available in a nearby lot. Pretty cool,



right?

Citizen scientists: Finally, in five years, IBM believes that sensors in smartphones, cars, computers, and social networks will help scientists get a real-time picture of where and how you live. In other words, ordinary people

will be able to donate their personal data to help scientific research.

What do you think of these predictions? If we only accomplish better batteries, I'll be happy. My phone has been unplugged for six hours and it's already dying. □

Celebrity Chefs Answer Your Questions on Facebook



If the layers of your Dulce de Leche Cake never come together quite as seamlessly as Scott Conant's, here's your chance to ask for his assistance. Food & Wine Magazine is launching a series of Q&A sessions with famous chefs on its Facebook Page today, and Conant, the host of the Food Network show 24 Hour Restaurant Battle is the first host.

The periodic Q&A sessions will feature top chefs posting to the Food & Wine Facebook Page. Answers will come directly from the chefs, so you don't need to worry that the cooking advice is actually coming from the social media intern.

Today's chat begins at 2:30 p.m. ET. Conant will offer his tips for holiday entertaining and share recipes from his new restaurant, D.O.C.G. Enoteca, in addition to taking questions. □

Android, iPhone lead Windows Phone 7 by 100 to 1?



Sure, the Windows Phone 7 platform has only recently launched and takes time for a platform to built up momentum in the marketplace...but Windows Phone 7 seems to have been struggling to find customers and new numbers from mobile

ad network Chitika don't seem to bode well. According to Chitika, for every one ad impression it sees from a Windows Phone 7 device, it sees 110 impressions from Android-powered devices and 172 impressions from iPhones. That might not be startling for a platform that's only just hit the streets, but Chitika notes that those numbers have been "relatively stable" over the last three weeks meaning during the height of the holiday buying season, they aren't seeing any significant uptick in impressions from Windows Phone 7 devices.

The figures are based on a sample of nearly 32 million ad impressions across Chitika's mobile ad network from November 23 through December 13, 2010.

Chitika's numbers with Windows Phone 7 not even cracking one half of one percent of the iPhone and Android's combined ad impressions seems to jive with recent industry assessments. Microsoft Windows Phone Program head Joe Belfiore admitted at the D: Dive Into Mobile event that Windows Phone 7 will take years to catch up to competing platforms, and an analyst with investment firm Goldman Sachs recently forecast Microsoft won't get to even a 10 percent market share in 2011. □

iPhone app instantly translates Spanish into English

You're hungry, and you've stumbled upon a new Mexican restaurant but the menu is only in Spanish. So what exactly is "Tacos de camaron"? Sounds good, but what's in it? Is there shellfish involved here?

Thanks to a clever new app that can read (more or less) Spanish words and translate them instantly into English using the iPhone's built-in camera, you can find out in a flash whether you've just ordered a yummy beef taco (buzz, try again) or a mouthful of shrimp.

The just-released Word Lens app (free, although you'll have to pony up \$5 each for the Spanish-to-English or English-to-Spanish dictionaries and yes, more dictionaries are on the way) was two years in the making, according to TechCrunch, and it works by "reading" words captured on the iPhone's camera lens and scanning the letters using optical character recognition (or OCR), a technology that's more commonly seen in document scanning software.

Here's how it works: Just pick

the dictionary you'd like to use, aim the iPhone's camera at the street sign or menu you want to translate, and hold still, as Word Lens replaces the original words with its translation, right there on the screen.

It's pretty amazing to watch Word Lens in action, and if the way in which it switches out words instantly on the screen sounds familiar, you might be thinking of similar "augmented reality" apps that have been cropping up for the iPhone and Android handsets the ones that let you view



your surroundings through a camera-assisted viewfinder, with little informational icons about nearby restaurants, shops, and subways that seem to be "floating" in the air. □



LONDON — If you think it's hard for most brides to feel comfortable in a new family, put yourself in Kate Middleton's shoes: "granny" is Queen Elizabeth II, dad is the famously cranky Prince Charles — and, hardest of all, she'll always be compared to the late Princess Di. No one can measure up to the departed, and Middleton will be jousting with the memory of one of the best-known women of the 20th Century. "That's a tough legacy to live up to, and I feel bad for the poor girl," said Elsie Andrews, a retired nurse, as

she weighed up Middleton's future with her fiancé Prince William. She said Kate shouldn't be judged on a "Diana scale" but should be allowed to "make her own waves" and find her own way through the royal maze. Still, Diana's imposing presence was unmistakable on the eventful day last month when Middleton and William, both 28, announced their engagement, largely because the prince chose to give his fiancée his mother's spectacular diamond-and-sapphire engagement ring.

Diana's legacy to burden Kate Middleton

William spoke movingly that day about using the ring as a way to give his late mother a role in the wedding, and Middleton talked publicly about Diana for the first time, calling her an inspiration.

Most engagement rings, of course, come with less baggage. Will the spectacular ring on Middleton's finger weigh her down, serving as a priceless reminder of the impossibly high expectations she faces as she eases into Diana's glass slippers by marrying an heir to the throne? Will Middleton carve out her own path in the royal drama or like Diana be crushed by the loneliness and pressure of being a real-life princess?

As Middleton seeks her place, she will find herself bumping into Diana's legend whichever way she turns.

Looking for glamor? Diana danced with John Travolta at the White House, palled around with Elton John, and spent some holidays off the French Riviera on luxury yachts while the paparazzi used ever longer lenses to try to catch her sunbathing. Looking for style? Diana's outfits by the likes of Versace, Galliano, Dior, Valentino and other iconic designers made her a fashion trailblazer whose impact was global. Part of her star power lay in the way her sad, haunted eyes were set off by some of the world's most

spectacular jewels.

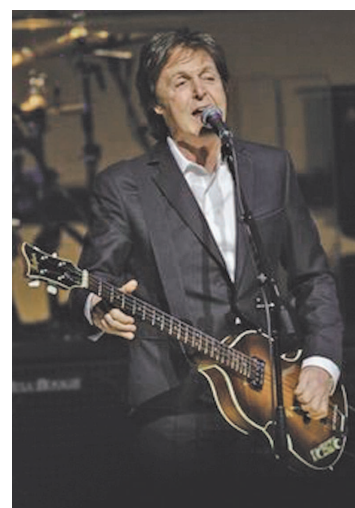
Looking for a charitable role? Diana broke the royal mold by embracing AIDS victims and helped shape government policy by walking through fields laced with land mines as part of her effort to get them banned. She was much more than a lady who lunched.

Middleton has stayed resolutely out of the limelight in recent weeks. When she does make her first public appearance since becoming engaged, the British public, and raftloads of commentators, will be gauging whether she has Diana's natural flair. But Diana's image 13 years after her death is still a moving target. Some view her as a compassionate "queen of hearts" while others see her as little more than a tall fashion plate. Diana's train wreck of a marriage left her desperately unhappy and this is how some

people remember her as a troubled, neurotic woman in need of help.

Intimidating? Just a little. Everything Diana did was front page. "I think it's undoubtedly a burden for Kate," said Susan Lee, a columnist at the Liverpool Echo newspaper who has written extensively about the royals. "Diana was the most photographed woman of the age. She transformed the House of Windsor, she changed the way we look at royalty, and she was very accessible, she spoke to ordinary people, and people felt they could speak to her. She made royalty human for the first time." Middleton may reject Diana's way and choose a much more private course once she becomes a princess. If she is looking for marital harmony, she will have to look beyond Diana for inspiration. □

Paul McCartney plays gig at tiny London club



"Who wants to save the 100 Club?," McCartney asked fans after he and his band walked on stage singing an a cappella version of "Hey Jude."

Tickets for the gig cost 60 pounds (\$90). Fans started lining up hours before the show in hopes of getting a seat.

"It's a great little venue so we were happy to be part of the campaign to save it. It's too good to lose," McCartney said after the concert. "We had a great time. It's great playing those little clubs and the audience is so up close it's like you're having dinner with them."

Ian Smith, who waited in line to attend, said he had been listening to McCartney for decades. He said he was drawn to the show by McCartney's astonishing longevity.

"I'm 47-years-old now," he said. "I was 5 when I first got into The Beatles and so I've followed him all my life really. He's had some ups and downs but he's a stayer and at 68 years old you've got to hand it to the guy, he still known how to do it."

LONDON — Former Beatle Paul McCartney played his smallest gig in more than a decade Friday in a bid to save a landmark London club faced with closure because of a steep rent increase.

McCartney played a lunchtime show before about 300 fans at the 100 Club in central London, wooing the crowd with "Magical Mystery Tour," "All My Loving" and a host of other favorites.

It marked the first time McCartney had played the 100 Club, which once hosted the Rolling Stones, the Who, Metallica and others, including American jazz great Louis Armstrong.

Belushi on Broadway? Aykroyd says he just might be

LOS ANGELES — If John Belushi were alive today, he probably would have quit Hollywood and might be directing on Broadway instead, says his old comedy partner, Dan Aykroyd. "I don't know today whether John, whether his spirit could take some of the abuse that you'd have to go through to be in the television, motion-picture business," Aykroyd said in a recent interview.

"John, even though he was tough, he was sensitive. He had a sensitive side. God, I just see him kind of walking in and maybe pitching an idea to people a third his age. I just don't know how."

Belushi, who died of a drug overdose in 1982 at age 33, would be 61 now. He and Aykroyd were part of the original "Saturday Night Live" cast, where they developed the characters that evolved into their epic 1980 big-screen comedy "The Blues Brothers." They also costarred in Steven Spielberg's 1979 World War II romp "1941" and partnered

again on the 1981 black comedy "Neighbors." Aykroyd co-wrote "Ghostbusters" for Belushi to star in. After Belushi died, the role in that 1984 blockbuster went to "SNL" colleague Bill Murray.

Directing on Broadway would be a good fit for Belushi today, Aykroyd speculated.

"He was very intellectual, John, and he was very well versed in theater and books and literature, science," said Aykroyd, 58. "He would be probably one of the top Broadway directors, doing really, really special work, doing Shakespeare, doing Congreve, doing Shaw."

"That's the caliber of work he'd be doing. Although the rest of us would still be making buddy comedies, he would have definitely risen above all of that and gone on to do really important work."

Aykroyd made his comments in a recent interview to promote "Yogi Bear," for which he provides the voice of the title character. □

BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY

Spanish PM insists on raising retirement age to 67

MADRID – Spain's prime minister said Friday the government is set on raising the retirement age to 67 from 65 in the new year, despite strong resistance from some opposition parties and labor unions who are threatening another general strike.

Spain's central bank and other financial institutions have urged Zapatero to make changes in the pension system as part of reforms crucial to helping the country slash its deficit to prepare for a coming wave of retirements and emerge from the economic crisis. His comments came as the central bank issued more negative news about the shaky banking sector, a key factor in Europe's effort to keep its government debt crisis from spreading. The bad loans ratio for the country's banks and financial institutions had risen to its highest level in 14 years, it said.

"The government maintains its proposal that the retirement age should be 67 years,"

Zapatero told reporters in Brussels following a European Union meeting.

"We can do it now progressively without any traumatic measures" that might be necessary 15 years down the line, he promised.

The government is intent on seeking consensus with other parties but the reform will be approved either way by Jan. 28, Zapatero said.

Spain's main parties have already agreed to extend the number of working years on which pensions are calculated. It is currently based on wages from the last 15 years. The parties have yet to set a new figure but it is expected to be either 20 years or 25 years. This means workers will have to contribute taxes for longer before being able to draw a pension.

But several parties are opposed and reject the reform, and union leaders have said it could spark another general strike similar to one held Sept. 29 that brought tens of

thousands of people onto the streets, canceled some flights and halted produce shipments. That national stoppage to protest government austerity measures and labor market reforms, the first in Spain in nearly a decade, was only partially successful. Labor Minister Celestino Corbacho said the strike had an uneven following and "a moderate effect."

Also Friday, Spain's central bank said the bad loans ratio for the country's banks and financial institutions rose to 5.66 percent in October, its highest level in 14 years. It said that of total loans of euro1.83 trillion (\$2.42 trillion), bad debts accounted for euro103.7 billion in October, up from euro101.3 billion in September.

Greece and Ireland have already needed bailouts, with heavy banking losses helping push Ireland into needing a rescue. Spain is trying to avoid the same fate.

Spanish banks, particularly



the savings banks, have been saddled with foreclosed property since the collapse of the key real estate sector. Many of these entities are being forced to merge under a consolidation process that Zapatero said would be finished by Dec. 24.

Moody's ratings agency this week said it was maintaining its negative outlook for Spanish banks and would review the country's debt rating for a possible downgrade.

Spain's central bank also reported that public debt was

now the equivalent of 57.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), its highest proportion in a decade and just below the 60 percent EU limit.

Spain's major task is to slash a swollen deficit from 11.2 percent of GDP in 2009 to within the EU limit of 3 percent by 2013.

The country's third-quarter economic growth was flat after two quarters of weak growth, although it was up 0.2 percent year-on-year the first such rise in seven quarters. □



LONDON – European shares edged upwards on Thursday before an EU summit aimed at creating a permanent financial rescue fund for debt-laden eurozone nations, dealers said.

London's FTSE 100 added 0.17 percent to 5,892.18 points, Frankfurt's DAX 30 index gained 0.15 percent to 7,026.94 points and the

Paris CAC 40 advanced 0.19 percent to 3,887.72.

The European single currency rebounded briefly after Madrid conducted a successful bond auction, in a eurozone sovereign bond market heavily skewed by the readiness of the European Central Bank to buy up government debt, as an exceptional step to defend the

European stocks advance before EU summit

eurozone.

But the Spanish IBEX 35 shares index dropped 0.21 percent to 9,989.50 points.

"The focus today is the EU summit, where markets are looking for a coherent and unified approach from policymakers to address the debt and banking crisis," said VTB Capital economist Neil MacKinnon.

European leaders will gather in Brussels to seek a permanent financial rescue fund to calm markets for good and turn the page on a roller-coaster year marked by Greek and Irish bailouts and fears for Spain.

"The EU summit which starts today could be the last significant market event of the year," added Rabobank

analyst Jane Foley.

Heads of state and government are holding a two-day summit amid stubborn concerns that Portugal and even wealthier Spain could tumble into the debt crisis that has rocked the euro.

The summit is scheduled to begin at 1600 GMT.

EU leaders now want to replace a 750-billion-euro (one-trillion-dollar) joint EU-IMF rescue mechanism, which was created in May and expires in 2013, with a permanent fund to shield the single currency for the long run.

The European Central Bank, which has bought billions of euros in government bonds to ease the eurozone debt crisis, has urged political leaders

to beef up the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF).

"There is likely to be support for permanent rescue mechanism to replace the EFSF," MacKinnon said.

Sentiment was hit on Wednesday after ratings agency Moody's announced it could cut Spain's credit rating again, one day after Standard & Poor's lowered its outlook for Belgium from stable to negative.

Spanish bond yields had soared close to a record high on Wednesday after the Moody's downgrade warning. Markets were also on edge after Athens was rocked by fresh riots against the debt-laden government's austerity measures. □

HEALTH

Aruba TODAY

London, tuberculosis capital of Western Europe



LONDON – The number of people infected with tuberculosis has jumped by 50 percent in London in the last decade, making it the tuberculosis capital of Western Europe, a new report says. Unlike other countries in the region where tuberculosis is dropping, the disease is on the rise in Britain, particularly in London. In 1999, there were about 2,309 cases. By 2009, London had 3,450 cases of Britain's more than 9,000 cases, according to an article published Friday in the medical journal, *Lancet*. Since only about 70 percent

of active tuberculosis cases are picked up, those numbers are an underestimate.

"We are concerned to see cases of TB at their highest levels since the 1970s," said Dr. Ibrahim Abubakar, head of tuberculosis surveillance at Britain's Health Protection Agency, in a statement. He was not connected to the commentary.

"The key to reducing levels of TB is early diagnosis and appropriate treatment," Abubakar said.

While tuberculosis remains rare in the U.K. about 15 people per 100,000 people are infected that is still higher than elsewhere in Western Europe. In France, an estimated 10 people per 100,000 have tuberculosis. Once known as the "white plague" in England because

of the loss of skin color in patients, tuberculosis was virtually wiped out after the introduction of drugs and vaccinations in the 1960s. But it has surged in recent years, including drug-resistant strains.

Most tuberculosis cases in Britain are in people born overseas, although not in recent arrivals. About 85 percent of people with tuberculosis have been in Britain for at least two years, meaning the disease is not being imported, but circulating locally.

"The rise in tuberculosis cases has nothing to do with migration and immigrants," said Alimuddin Zumla of University College London, author of the commentary. "This is a fallacy that needs to be corrected," he said, noting

the same risks that plagued Victorian England like poor housing, bad ventilation and overcrowding are to blame for Britain's current outbreak. Though tuberculosis mainly affects groups like drug users, refugees, and people with HIV, its prevalence in prisons is problematic. The spread of tuberculosis in prisons has occasionally infected staff and then spilled over into the general population.

Britain is one of the world's biggest foreign aid donors, with considerable investments in projects fighting tuberculosis in poor countries.

"We need to clean up our own back garden first," Zumla said, calling for new strategies and more money to reverse the British epidemic. "Charity begins at home." □

Drug Companies Await FDA Guidelines for Online Marketing

On Twitter, professional race-car driver Charlie Kimball's nearly 1,300 followers monitor his every move: the countdown to key races; television interviews; dinner in Sonoma, Calif. It's hard not to be inspired by one crucial detail of Kimball's narrative: the 25-year-old is among the world's few professional racers to be diagnosed with diabetes. That's partly why Novo Nordisk, the Danish pharmaceutical giant, pursued Kimball for an elaborate campaign in which he regularly tweets about taking two of the company's insulin products. "Just used my Levemir FlexPen," he tweeted last June, referring to Novo Nordisk's disposable insulin injector. Levemir appears on the front of Kimball's racing uniform, his car and on his official Twitter page, *racewithinsulin*. "It's a great way to connect with the diabetes community," he says.

The *racewithinsulin* campaign has turned Kimball into a rock star within the diabetes community. It has also made him one of the most provocative examples of how pharmaceutical companies are cleverly navigating the emerging, largely unregulated social-media space.

The Food and Drug Administration has stringent guidelines on how drugs can be marketed in newspapers and magazines, and only in 1997 issued rules for broadcast media - chiefly, that companies must disclose basic information about a drug's known risks. But there are no such regulations for social media. (See the top 10 Twitter moments of 2010.)

Continued on Next Page

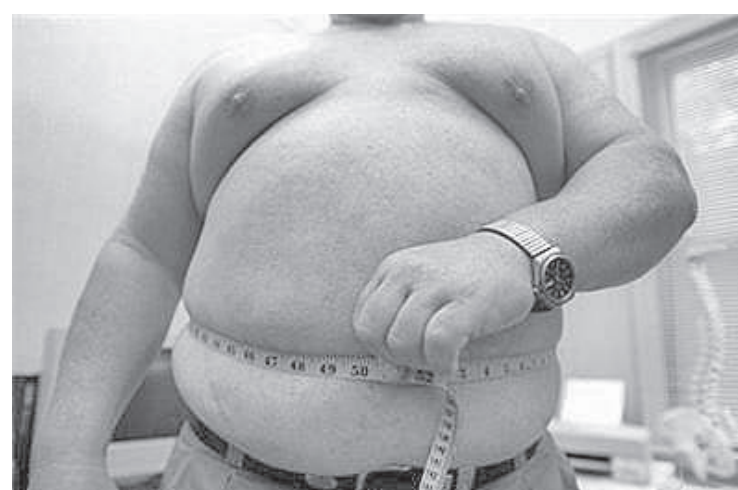
Obesity May Interfere With Vitamin D Absorption

The more obese a person is, the poorer his or her vitamin D status, a new study by a team of Norwegian researchers suggests.

The study found an inverse relationship between excess pounds and an insufficient amount of vitamin D, which is critical to cell health, calcium absorption and proper immune function. Vitamin D deficiency can raise the risk for bone deterioration and certain types of cancer.

The researchers also suggest that overweight and obese people may have problems processing the vitamin properly.

The team noted that after the so-called "sunshine vitamin" is initially absorbed (through either sun exposure or the consumption of such foods as oily fish and fortified milk), the body must then convert it into a usable form, called 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D. This conversion process, however, seems to be short-



circuited among obese people, complicating efforts to gauge their true vitamin D health.

The findings are published in the January issue of the *Journal of Nutrition*.

To investigate the impact of obesity on vitamin D absorption, the team spent six years tracking 1,464 women and 315 men, with an average age of 49. Based on the participants' body mass index (BMI), an indicator of body fatness calculated from a person's weight and height, the average participant was

deemed to be obese. About 11 percent were categorized as "morbidly obese."

From the outset, overall vitamin D levels were found to be below the healthy range, the authors noted. By the end of the study, overall levels of vitamin D were found to have dropped off "significantly" while BMI readings rose by 5 percent.

The research team concluded that having a higher-than-normal weight, body fat and BMI was linked to a poorer vitamin D profile. □

FDA GUIDELINES

Continued from Previous Page

This month, however, the FDA is expected to issue guidelines on how drug companies market drugs, from Viagra to Ambien, on outlets such as Twitter, Facebook and Google. For these companies, it's no small matter. Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project estimates that 61% of adults get health information online. Analysts say online marketing accounts for a growing share of the roughly \$4 billion pharmaceutical companies spend each year advertising their products. In the first half of this year, companies overall spent some \$5.7 billion on so-called search ads on outlets like Yahoo!, according to the Interactive Advertising Bureau, a coalition of companies selling most online advertising in the U.S. "There's a lot at stake," says Jeffrey K. Francer, assistant general counsel for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association of America, a leading Washington, D.C., trade group.

Surprisingly, it's the pharmaceutical industry that's been at the forefront of moving the FDA to issue social-media rules. The companies realize their traditional websites and advertising strategies are no longer sufficient tools to promote products in a competitive marketplace in which doctors, pharmacists and consumers aggressively trade information about medicine on blogs. The companies are also aware that "if they can't fully participate in the social-media conversation, they get marginalized," says John Mack, publisher of Pharma Marketing Blog, which attracts about 25,000 industry readers a month. One impetus is to protect companies' credibility in the face of rogue online outlets selling dubious goods. Part of the push is to resolve practical challenges, like how to sufficiently explain a drug's risks within the bounds of a 140-character tweet. Or a sponsored Google ad's roughly two lines of text? (See TIME's health and medicine covers.) Last year, the FDA sent letters to 14 companies - including Johnson & Johnson, and GlaxoSmithKline - warning about the use of social media to market products, in some cases calling the efforts "misleading." One December 2009 letter went to Bayer regarding Mirena, a drug it promoted on the website Mom Central until February of that year. The campaign included a scripted conversation from a nurse practitioner, Barb Dehn, whose personal website bills her as "an award-winning author and a nationally recognized health expert." Mirena, Dehn told consumers, is "a birth-control method that allows for spontaneous intimacy." The FDA said the script "misleadingly" overstated "the proven efficacy of Mirena," and failed to mention the possibility that women who take the drug while pregnant may lose a baby or become infertile. □

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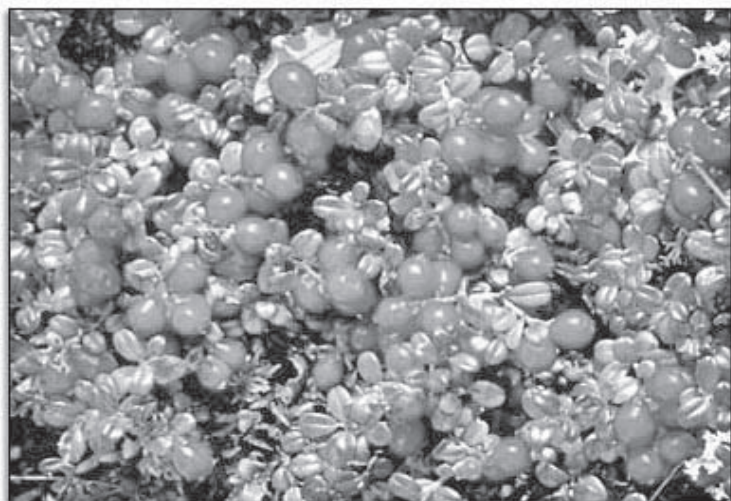
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Cheers! Red Wine, Cranberries Are Good for Your Teeth



When you pop open that bottle of red wine this holiday season, consider toasting its benefits to your teeth. After all, compounds in red wine can prevent cavities and plaque build-up, researchers say. The compounds - called polyphenols - block a molecule made by the bacteria

streptococcus mutans, which are found in all our mouths, said researcher Hyun Koo, a microbiologist at University of Rochester Medical Center in New York. Normally, these bacteria break down sugar we eat and make sticky molecules called glucans, which let bacteria to

cling to our teeth and damage their surfaces, Koo told MyHealthNewsDaily.

These bacteria also produce an acid that erodes the tooth enamel, leading to cavities, he said.

But the fermented grape stems, seeds and skins left over from wine production contain high amounts of polyphenols.

The polyphenols can block the ability of S. mutans to make glucans, letting the good bacteria in the mouth thrive, while disabling the bad bacteria from sticking to the teeth, Koo said.

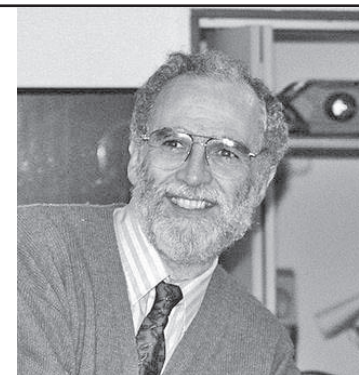
“The oral cavity is a very rich microbial environment, so you can’t just smoke [the bad bacteria] out,” he said. “There are beneficial and pathogenic organisms.”

Koo, who was a dentist for

two years before becoming a microbiologist, also found that compounds in cranberries work similarly - they block the molecules that enable the sticky surface to form on our teeth.

When researchers fed rats the cranberry compounds, called A-type proanthocyanidins, they found that the bacteria’s production of acid and glucans were reduced by 70 percent, and cavities were reduced by 45 percent, according to a study Koo published in March in the dental health journal Caries Research.

But Koo warned that eating heaps of cranberry sauce or downing glass after glass of red wine won’t help you reap the dental benefits of these compounds. □



Scientist alleges religious discrimination in Kentucky

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – An astronomer argues that his Christian faith and his peers’ belief that he is an evolution skeptic kept him from getting a prestigious job as the director of a new student observatory at the University of Kentucky.

Martin Gaskell quickly rose to the top of a list of applicants being considered by the university’s search committee. One member said he was “breathtakingly above the other applicants.”

Others openly worried his Christian faith could conflict with his duties as a scientist, calling him “something close to a creationist” and “potentially evangelical.”

Even though Gaskell says he is not a creationist, he claims he was passed over for the job at UK’s MacAdam Student Observatory three years ago because of his religion and statements that were perceived to be critical of the theory of evolution.

Gaskell has sued the university, claiming lost income and emotional distress. Last month a judge rejected a motion from the university and allowed it to go to trial Feb. 8.

“There is no dispute that based on his application, Gaskell was a leading candidate for the position,” U.S. District Judge Karl S. Forester wrote in the ruling.

Gaskell later learned that professors had discussed his purported religious views during the search process. Gaskell told the AP in an e-mail that he didn’t grow frustrated, but felt “one should not allow universities to get away with religious discrimination.” □

Amazing Spectacle: Total Lunar Eclipse Monday Night

For a few hours on the night of Dec. 20 to Dec. 21, the attention of tens of millions of people will be drawn skyward, where the mottled, coppery globe of our moon will hang completely immersed in the long, tapering cone of shadow cast out into space by our Earth. If the weather is clear, favorably placed skywatchers will have a view of one of nature’s most beautiful spectacles: a total eclipse of the moon. Unlike a total eclipse of the sun, which is only visible to those in the path of totality, eclipses of the moon can usually be observed from one’s own backyard. The passage of the moon through the Earth’s shadow is equally visible from all places within the hemisphere where the moon is above the horizon. The total phase of the upcoming event will be visible across all of North and South America, as well as the northern and western part of Europe, and a small part of northeast Asia, including Korea and much of Japan. Totality will also be visible in its entirety from the North Island of New Zealand and Hawaii a potential viewing audience of about 1.5 billion people. This will be the first opportunity from any place on earth to see the moon undergo a total eclipse in 34 months. This star chart shows where in the sky the upcoming lunar



eclipse will appear. And check this NASA lunar eclipse chart to see how visible the eclipse will be from different regions around the world.

Stages of the eclipse

There is nothing complicated about viewing this celestial spectacle. Unlike an eclipse of the sun, which necessitates special viewing precautions in order to avoid eye damage, an eclipse of the moon is perfectly safe to watch. All you’ll need to watch are your eyes, but binoculars or a telescope will give a much nicer view. □

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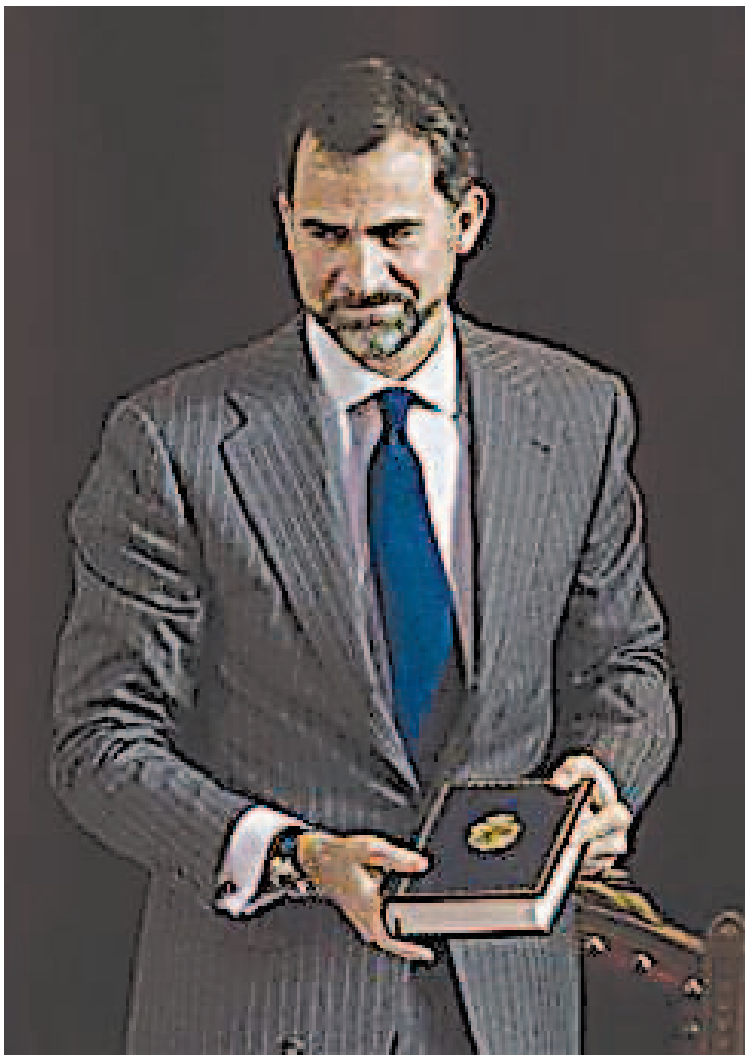
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El príncipe de España, Felipe de Borbón, sostiene la nueva guía ortográfica para el español durante una ceremonia en la Real Academia Española de la lengua, el viernes 17 de diciembre de 2010, en Madrid. (Foto AP/Arturo Rodríguez)

Príncipe Felipe de España destaca ambición de nueva ortografía

MADRID (AP) - El príncipe de España, Felipe de Borbón, subrayó el viernes que la nueva ortografía del español es “mucho más ambiciosa”, ya que muestra de manera más clara la “preciosa unidad del español”.

Los príncipes de Asturias, Felipe y Letizia Ortiz, herederos de la corona española presidieron en Madrid la presentación oficial de la “Ortografía del español” (Espasa), un trabajo que trata de unificar las normas que regulan la escritura de un idioma que comparten 400 millones de personas en todo el mundo.

Se trata de la primera ortografía que elaboran de forma coordinada las 22 academias de la lengua de España y América. En ese sentido, Felipe afirmó que este trabajo “explica de manera razonada y científica el sistema ortográfico del español” y aseguró

que el buen uso del idioma es “un derecho y un deber”.

“La ortografía da forma a nuestros pensamientos y a nuestros sentimientos”, dijo Felipe. “Si la descuidáramos, la dejaríamos empobrecerse”.

Algunas de las nuevas normas incluyen la supresión de las letras “ch” y “ll”, así como la eliminación de la tilde en palabras como “guión” o “truhán”.

Esta ortografía, que continúa la senda abierta hace un año con la Gramática del español, saldrá a la venta la próxima semana en las librerías de todo el mundo hispanoparlante. La tirada inicial es de 85.000 ejemplares y el precio universal será de 52,80 dólares (adaptado al cambio monetario de cada país). □

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